

SOVIET
PEACE
EFFORTS

*on the Eve
of World
War II*

Part 2

DK

266

.A3

S213

v.2

SOVIET PEACE EFFORTS

on the Eve of World War II

(September 1939 - August 1939)

Documents and Records

Part Two

EDITED BY V. M. BARTIN
A. A. BUKHARIN, A. M. GOREV, M. A. KHARLAMOV,
V. M. KURKOVA & A. I. LITVINOV, V. M. SIVIL,
L. M. ZEMSKOVA

No. 264. Telegram from the Deputy People's Commissar
for Foreign Affairs of the USSR to the People's
Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the USSR

Ankara, April 29, 1939

Discussions with Sarajoglu began tonight after all sorts of protocol visits. Present were Menemencioglu * and Nikitnikova **. We sat talking for about two hours.

Through Menemencioglu, Sarajoglu familiarized me with the main phases of his talks with the English and French. In regard to the latter it should be noted that they displayed no initiative of their own but merely kept informing the Turks, orally or in writing, that they were associating themselves with the English proposals. Sarajoglu's communication was written down by us there and then. In the main it repeats, naturally, what we had already known in Moscow. But it also contains some additional information. The English began negotiations with the Turks at the time when Germany presented her well-known ultimatum to Rumania.*** Through the English Ambassador in Ankara Sarajoglu was informed that it would be easier for England to respond to Rumania's request for assistance if the English Government was aware that Rumania would also be aided by the Balkan Entente⁸² and by Poland. Sarajoglu replied that although Rumania herself had not approached Turkey, Turkey would be prepared to discuss with England, in a spirit of good will, ways of helping Rumania.

On the next day the English Ambassador explained that Germany had not presented Rumania with an ultimatum. However, on the question of eventual assistance to Rumania the Ambassador said he

* Secretary-General of the Turkish Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

** Chargé d'Affaires of the USSR in Turkey.

*** See Documents Nos. 155, 161, 166.

would be given instructions which he would communicate to the Turks at the proper time. But the Ambassador received no further instructions.

The question of assistance to Rumania was again raised with the Turks by Gafencu, who came to Istanbul to see Sarajoglu. He informed Sarajoglu that Rumania, which had already received a unilateral English guarantee against Germany,* would like to have a similar guarantee from Turkey and even from the entire Balkan Entente. In effect this would mean that in protecting Rumania, the members of the Balkan Entente would be assisted by England. Sarajoglu replied that Turkey preferred to reach a direct understanding with England. Sarajoglu and Menemencioglu are convinced that Gafencu's proposal has been inspired by the English who are loath to assume a direct obligation to guarantee Turkey.

The next phase of Sarajoglu's negotiations with the Western Powers was connected with the Albanian incident.¹⁰⁰ Looking for assistance against Italy, Albania approached Turkey and asked her to enquire of France and Britain whether she could count on their protection if she offered resistance to the Italians. Britain and France asked Turkey whether she herself would help Albania. Sarajoglu replied that Turkey had done all that Albania had asked her to. Her assistance was limited to the role of mediator.

The next stage in the Anglo-Turkish negotiations was Chamberlain's enquiry of April 12 as to whether in his parliamentary statement about English and French guarantees to Greece he could say that the same guarantees were being offered by Turkey as well. Sarajoglu replied that he could not decide on such a matter without Parliament. And Parliament would want to know what Turkey would get from Britain and France in return. It was finally decided that Chamberlain should declare that Britain had notified Turkey in good time about the Anglo-French guarantees being offered to Greece.

Two or three days later Britain suggested that Turkey associate herself with the Anglo-French guarantees to Greece by entering into a tripartite agreement with Britain and France against the threat of aggression. Sarajoglu asked for clarification as to the direction from which that threat was being anticipated. It was explained to him that the agreement was to be concluded not only against Italy but also against Germany. Sarajoglu enquired what was meant by mutual assistance and also whether Britain was conducting negotiations with the Soviet Union. He expressed his conviction that without the USSR it was impossible to create an "Eastern front" against the aggressors. He had not received any answer from the British Ambassador to these questions.

Having decided to give the British a comprehensive reply, Sarajoglu made the following statement to the British Ambassador.

* See Document No. 228.

Firstly, British and Turkish interests in the Mediterranean and the Balkans coincided; secondly, since in the event of opposition to the aggressors they would in the first place make a dash for the Straits, Turkey wanted to be assured of effective British assistance; thirdly, until Turkey was assured of such assistance she considered it necessary to preserve for the outside world a position of neutrality.

In connection with the last point of the Turkish reply, the British had counted on the Turks being willing to conclude two agreements: one public, the other secret. Sarajoglu told the British, however, that Turkey would not agree to a secret agreement.

In the same oral statement to the English Ambassador, Sarajoglu had added that in protecting the Straits Turkey could not do without the assistance of the USSR and she was therefore interested in knowing in what state were Britain's negotiations with the USSR. He pointed out further that Britain should help Turkey in bringing about an agreement between Rumania and Bulgaria on the question of Dobruja. Otherwise Turkey's agreement with Britain, France and the USSR on countering the aggressor in the Mediterranean and in the Balkans might finally throw Bulgaria into the arms of Germany.

According to Sarajoglu, the British had replied that they would immediately begin studying the question of concrete possibilities of rendering Turkey aid in protecting the Straits. They would also endeavour to support Turkey's attempts to bring Rumania and Bulgaria to an agreement regarding Dobruja. As for Britain's negotiations with the USSR, they were proceeding smoothly.

Sarajoglu assured us that on April 25, after a meeting of the parliamentary party group, he had been authorized to convey to the British the following Turkish reply on the main questions touched upon in previous negotiations:

(1) If all the other conditions advanced by Turkey were met, she would agree that in the event of a clash with Italy, Turkey and Britain should render one another assistance.

(2) In the event of aggression in the Balkans, Turkey would assist England only if such aggression constituted a threat to herself.

(3) The Anglo-Turkish agreement on mutual assistance should be supplemented by a similar agreement between Britain and the USSR.

(4) A special agreement between Turkey and the USSR defining the conditions and methods of their mutual assistance in the Straits and in the Black Sea was necessary.

(5) It was essential for Turkey to be provided with economic and financial assistance along with military supplies.

(6) Turkey proposed the conclusion of an agreement to last fifteen years.

(7) The agreement should be ratified by Parliament and made public.

There are certain vague points in Sarajoglu's communications. He may be holding something back or even deliberately confusing the issue, concealing the fact that we were not promptly and sufficiently informed about the timing of the negotiations with the

British. I shall try to clear up these vague points and obtain the texts which we need. I have been invited to see Ismet Inonu tomorrow.

Potemkin

From the archives.

No. 265. Telegram from the Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the USSR

Ankara, April 30, 1939

I am communicating the elucidations which Menemencioglu has given us on Sarajoglu's instructions on some of the points of the Turkish proposals of April 25:

(1) Menemencioglu definitely confirms that Turkey and Britain have pledged to render each other assistance against Italy in all circumstances and in any place, not excepting even those cases where the Turks or the British might consider it necessary to begin military actions against Italy without awaiting an attack by her.

(2) Turkey will take action against Germany only if she thinks that German aggression constitutes a direct threat to her.

(3) In regard to mutual assistance by Turkey and the USSR, Menemencioglu stated that in Turkey's opinion a mutual assistance treaty should be concluded between Britain and the USSR. It was up to the USSR and Britain to define the terms of such a treaty. Turkey's agreement with the Soviet Union, Menemencioglu felt, could include mutual assistance obligations in the Straits, in the Black Sea and possibly in the Balkans.

(4) In respect of the economic and financial assistance and also of the military supplies envisaged in point 5 of the Turkish reply of April 25, Menemencioglu explained that economic aid to Turkey could take the form of British purchases of those Turkish goods that Germany did not buy. Turkey would also need monetary assistance, and military supplies would also be essential. Until Britain undertook to meet Turkey's concrete demands in all these matters no mutual assistance treaty would be signed. Therefore, the idea was that after Britain agreed in principle, a special commission would be set up to determine what she should give Turkey and in what quantities. As Menemencioglu put it, Turkey would demand that "the money be laid on the table."

When I visited Ismet yesterday Sarajoglu promised to give me the text of the Turkish proposals. This morning we received a message from Menemencioglu to the effect that because it was a public

holiday no typist was available and the documents could only be ready tomorrow. In exchange Menemencioglu asked us to give him the copy of the text of our proposals to Britain and France.

Potemkin

From the archives.

No. 266. Memorandum of a Conversation Between a German Journalist and a Counsellor of the German Foreign Minister's Office

May 2, 1939

I had a long conversation with Doctor Kleist, one of Ribbentrop's closest aides.

Kleist gave me the following picture of the political situation.

According to what Hitler himself said several days ago to Ribbentrop, Germany is at present going through the phase of absolute military entrenchment in the East, which is to be accomplished by harsh methods and without consideration for ideological factors. The ruthless purge of the East is to be followed by the "Western phase," which will culminate in the defeat of France and England to be brought about by political or military methods. Only after this will the great and decisive clash with the Soviet Union become possible and the rout of the Soviets become a practical proposition.

At the present time we are still in the phase of military entrenchment in the East. Poland is next in line. The German actions in March 1939—the creation of a protectorate in Bohemia and Moravia, the formation of a Slovak State, the incorporation of the Memel region—were in fact largely directed against Poland and had been regarded as anti-Polish actions. Hitler realized sometime last February that Poland could not be drawn over to his side through the former methods of negotiations. He therefore decided that Poland would have to be brought to her knees by force. A narrow circle of Hitler's associates were informed that the latest German proposal to Poland had been made in the firm conviction that it would be rejected by her.¹⁰⁸ Hitler and Ribbentrop were certain that for considerations of home and foreign policy the Polish Government could not accept the German demands. It was only for this reason that the clause concerning the guarantee of the inviolability of Poland's frontiers for a period of 25 years—a clause that was quite inconceivable in itself—was included in the German proposal without a moment's

hesitation. The German calculations proved correct. By rejecting the proposal Poland had in effect enabled us to get rid of the German-Polish Non-Aggression Pact²² and obtain a free hand in regard to Poland.

If things develop in accordance with German plans, and unless Poland voluntarily capitulates in the coming weeks, which we can hardly expect, in July-August she will be subjected to a military attack. The Polish General Staff is alive to the possibility of military actions in the autumn, after the harvest. By acting suddenly, we are hoping to crush Poland and achieve a swift success. Large-scale strategical resistance by the Polish army should be broken within eight to fourteen days. The attack on Poland is to be conducted at full strength simultaneously from the German Eastern frontier, from Slovakia, the Carpatho-Ukraine and Eastern Prussia and, in the opinion of the German General Staff, it should result in a complete success. Such Polish pockets of resistance as will remain and as will undoubtedly continue to appear throughout the country in no small numbers, are to be put down in the course of a bitter small-scale war, but one which will no longer be of any international significance.

German preparations for war against Poland are scheduled to be completed in July-August. Measures of a military nature have been started only recently. They are being carried out thoroughly and on a full scale, and in the strictest possible secrecy. Preparation of the political propaganda offensive against Poland is only just beginning. At present material is being selected for a propaganda onslaught against Poland. In the forefront are the following topics: under the topic "Poland is a second patchwork state" will be denounced the fatal policy of terror carried out by Poland with regard to the nationalities' question; under the topic "Poland is a declining, reactionary state" will be shown the poverty of the Polish peasants, the country's cultural backwardness, the feudal method of managing the economy leading to a decline, and the hunger and miserable existence of the Polish population; under the topic "parasites in power" will be shown the degeneration of the ruling Polish upper crust, the venality of the Polish leaders, their decadence and class alienation from the broad masses. Other similar topics are also being elaborated. They are to be incorporated into theses and slogans and published in the press at the appropriate time. The aim of this campaign is to influence world public opinion and the Polish people. It will be necessary to bring about a split in the Polish nation and to stage a class-motivated rebellion against the political leadership. It is not yet clear to us who will play the role of Benes in Poland. Smigly-Rydz probably will not be suitable for that role. All in all, preparation of the propaganda offensive against Poland will take about two months.

It would be ideal if the conflict with Poland were not openly provoked by Germany. At present we in Berlin are studying the question of using the Ukrainians in this affair. Agreement has been reached

with Voloshin* and Revay** on granting broad autonomy to the Carpatho-Ukraine within the Hungarian State. We would thereby regain the confidence of the Ukrainian masses in Eastern Galicia and strengthen the waning will of the Ukrainians to fight. There is no need to apply any special measures against the Ukrainian leading circles, for the latest events have on no account shaken their loyalty to Berlin. Having carried out this kind of preparation we could then give the Polish Ukraine the signal to rebel. From Slovakia and the Carpatho-Ukraine we would immediately dispatch large quantities of arms and ammunition and also send in combat-trained detachments of *Sicheviki*. Such close and direct contact has been established between Berlin and Lwow that there should be no doubt about a mass uprising of the Ukrainians. The hotbed of the conflagration in the Ukrainian regions would give Germany an excuse for large-scale military intervention. This whole project is giving rise to only one concern in Berlin. That is the possible reaction of the Soviet Union.

We feel that the conflict with Poland can be localized. England and France are, as hitherto, not prepared to fight for Poland. If within the shortest possible period of time we crush most of Poland's resistance, England will stage a naval demonstration, France will do some saber-rattling behind her Maginot Line, and that will be all. If, however, contrary to expectations, a European war in connection with the action against Poland proves likely, we shall then know that a German strike against Poland serves merely as an excuse for the Western Powers to wage a war against Germany, and that a preventive war against Germany is a foregone conclusion. In that case Hitler is ready to risk a major collision. In any event, we shall not allow ourselves to be provoked at a moment that is not in our favour, but will leave the choice of the time to act in our own hands. At the present time we would not agree to European war in view of our insufficient preparedness and the unfavourable international situation; we are hoping, however, that in three or four months' time we will be fully prepared. Germany's leaders are confident of their victory.

Our aviation will be of decisive significance. According to calculations of German military experts, all the English ports, for instance, can be wiped out within six hours. The devastating effect of German aviation has so far been tested only once: during the Civil War in Spain, at Guernica. It was a striking success. As a result of a massive raid by German aircraft the city was levelled. From this standpoint the rout of France and England does not seem too complicated an affair. America's intervention would come too late.

In connection with the forthcoming strike at Poland the South-East has now once again become the object of intensive study in

* Head of the Autonomous Government of Carpatho-Ukraine, October 1938-March 1939.

** A Minister in the Autonomous Government of Carpatho-Ukraine, October 1938-March 1939.

Berlin. We must get closer to Rumania. We must exert direct pressure on Bucharest. To this end we want to liquidate independent Slovakia by incorporating her into Hungary. Slovakia is non-viable anyway and her political leadership is incompetent. We want to establish a German Protectorate over Hungary, which will be extended through the incorporation of Slovakia, and thus to thrust our troops forward to the Rumanian border. After this Rumania will capitulate.

In the Baltic States we want to achieve the same objective in a different way. There will be no use of force, no pressure or threats (we are conducting economic talks with Lithuania displaying a maximum of goodwill and courtesy). By this method we shall bring about the neutrality of the Baltic States, that is, their definite alienation from the Soviet Union. In the event of war the neutrality of the Baltic States is as important for us as the neutrality of Belgium or Holland; some time later, if it should suit us, we shall violate that neutrality, but then, in view of our previously concluded non-aggression pacts, there would be no mechanism of agreement between the Baltic States and the Soviet Union that would lead to the automatic intervention of the USSR.

Thus, the action against Poland will be carried out in July or August. If the Poles should attempt to provoke a preventive war before then, the situation will look quite different. Whether or not we shall counter this Polish provocation with a massive strike will depend on Hitler's decision and on his assessment of the international situation. In any case, it will be unpleasant if the Poles should dictate to us the laws of action and involve us in a war at the present moment, when the international situation is not favourable for us and when Germany's preparation for war has not yet been completed.

From the archives.

No. 267. Memorandum of a Conversation Between the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR and the British Ambassador in the USSR

May 3, 1939

Seeds came to say that he had received instructions from Halifax a couple of days ago but had not considered the matter to be important enough to "bother me during the holidays". The instructions were to assure us, as a matter of courtesy, that the British Govern-

ment was studying our proposal* and the reply was being held up only because of the Government's preoccupation with the question of conscription and other matters.

Seeds had also been instructed by Halifax to clear up the following misunderstanding. Maisky had informed us that in the conversation of April 11 Halifax had asked him what kind of assistance we could give to Rumania.** Subsequently Maisky had, on our instructions, responded with a counter-question about the kind of assistance which England and France could offer Rumania, adding that the USSR, for its part, was prepared to give such assistance.*** At the time Halifax was not aware that this was a reply to Halifax's question, as he had already telegraphed to Seeds his proposal about our unilateral declaration. Halifax could not recall, however, ever having put to Maisky a question about our assistance. Nor could he find any trace of this in his notes.

I read out to Seeds the relevant passage from Maisky's telegram which says quite definitely that Halifax had not only enquired about our assistance, but was repeating a question that he had previously put to Maisky. Furthermore, in communicating our reply, Maisky had quite definitely said that it was a reply to Halifax's query. Why then was he not told at the time that there had been no query? Seeds spread his hands in bewilderment.

In reply to my question about the Anglo-Turkish negotiations, Seeds said that in so far as assistance against Italy was concerned agreement had been reached, but in other respects the Turkish reply was contingent on negotiations with the USSR.

Litvinov

From the archives.

No. 268. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in Britain to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the USSR

May 3, 1939

Summarizing the information I have culled from the press and from my meetings and conversations with various persons (Halifax, Hore-Belisha, Beaverbrook, Churchill, Eden, Greenwood, Lloyd George and others) since my return from Moscow, I can report the following:

* See Document No. 239.

** See Document No. 226.

*** See Document No. 230.

1. The mood of the general public everywhere, except for a part of Scotland, is decidedly anti-German. Hitler's speech¹⁰⁹ had not had any big effect here despite the fact that on the day after it was made some newspapers (notably the Beaverbrook press) started talking about the possibility of new negotiations with Germany. The need to resist aggression is becoming a universal conviction. Hence the country's willingness to accept conscription (the Labour Party's opposition to conscription is not serious and it is already beginning to crumble). Hence the immense popularity among the masses of the idea of an alliance with the USSR. At political meetings and rallies throughout the country each mention of such an alliance is greeted with an ovation. In a recent public opinion poll, which reflects the mood of the country fairly accurately, 84 per cent of those questioned were in favour of an immediate alliance with the USSR.

2. The Government is a different matter altogether. Of course, it is feeling the pressure of public sentiments, and most of the ministers are at present in favour of resisting aggression, but so far the Government has evaded drawing the logical conclusions. The most important thing, however, is that Chamberlain, Simon and other "appeasers" have not yet finally given up their Munich policy. They have been compelled to retreat under the pressure of the masses and the pressure of the logic of events, but they are doing so most reluctantly. They are trying to keep the inescapable concessions to a minimum and, where possible, they are even attempting to go back once again to the methods of the "appeasement" period (one example is the return of British Ambassador Henderson to Berlin). This half-way stand of the British Government is in evidence at every step, notably in matters pertaining to the reorganization of the Cabinet, to conscription and to our proposal. Chamberlain is stubbornly postponing until the very last moment the bringing into the Government of men like Churchill, Eden and others, though this is regarded here as inevitable before long. The *Daily Telegraph* and the Beaverbrook press, not to mention the Left-wing papers, have already launched a campaign on these lines. This is highly significant. Chamberlain is also stubbornly resisting the introduction of conscription; and when he saw he would have to yield on this point, he arranged to have only one age group called up, although the Cabinet had originally been contemplating calling up three categories.

A curious game is being played with our proposal.* At first Chamberlain tried to throw a veil of silence over it and to delay a reply at least until Hitler's speech. Another idea was to reject our proposal and go back to the English proposal calling for our unilateral guarantee to the USSR's European limitrophe countries. However, thanks to the advocates of alliance with the USSR (Vansittart and others) within the Foreign Office, our proposal began very rapidly to leak

* See Document No. 239.

into the press, so that by the time I returned, the basic points of the proposal had become widely known. The Opposition began putting the pressure on Parliament and a lively discussion was started in the press. The conspiracy of silence was broken. The Government found itself in an awkward situation and was compelled to begin a more serious discussion of the Soviet proposal. My return also made it more difficult to continue the procrastination game. The result was that the Cabinet began to consider our proposals seriously, but it is not yet clear what conclusions it will arrive at. A Government decision may be expected within the next few days.

Ambassador

From the archives.

No. 269. Telegram from the Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the USSR

Ankara, May 3, 1939

The main question the Turks are interested in concerns our general attitude to their negotiations with England and to the proposals contained in Sarajoglu's reply to the English Ambassador of April 25.* Incidentally, Ismet and Sarajoglu have been asking whether the Soviet Government was pleased with the fact that in her negotiations with the English Turkey had firmly insisted on the participation of the USSR in the contemplated agreement. You will probably have to give an evaluation of each of the paragraphs of the Turkish letter of April 25. In the process it will be necessary to determine which parts of the Turkish proposals we regard as being acceptable and compatible with our own proposals communicated to the French and English. Notably, Ismet asked me whether the USSR would agree to render assistance to Turkey in the Straits and what form such assistance could take. Menemencioglu posed the question in a broader way and spoke of the possibility of extending the Soviet-Turkish Agreement to cover also the Black Sea and even the Balkans.

Potemkin

From the archives.

* See Document No. 264.

No. 270. Telegram from the Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the USSR

Ankara, May 3, 1939

Chinese Ambassador Toug came to see me and told me of his conversation with von Papen* whom he had known since the time he was in Vienna. Papen told Toug that he had taken a most active part in preparing the Anschluss and in the occupation of Czechoslovakia. In his own words, Papen had come to Turkey with the task of ensuring her neutrality between the Axis and the states of the opposite camp. From England Germany wanted one thing: freedom of action in Eastern Europe and in the Balkans. Papen allegedly requested Toug to sound out for him why I had come and what we were agreeing on with the Turks. I must say I do not quite trust this Chinese.

Potemkin

From the archives.

No. 271. Telegram from the Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the USSR

Ankara, May 4, 1939

The following is an assessment of our proposal** by Sarajoglu which he communicated to me in today's conversation. Concerning points 1, 2 and 3, the Turkish Government regards as highly desirable the agreement envisaged in them between England, France and the USSR. Concerning point 4, the Turkish Government recognizes as fully justified our demand that the English Government elucidate against whom its promised assistance to Poland is directed. Concerning point 5, the Turkish Government regards as equally logical our demand for the extension or the abrogation of the Polish-Rumanian Treaty.⁹⁹ According to Sarajoglu, he has already spoken with Gafencu about the Treaty. Its literal implications are that it provides for mutual assistance by Poland and Rumania against any aggression. Gafencu admitted, however, that the Treaty was original-

* German Ambassador in Turkey.

** See Document No. 239.

ly directed against the USSR. Gafencu appears to favor the idea of removing from the Treaty its original anti-Soviet edge. Gafencu is expected in Ankara in mid-May. Sarajoglu believes that it will be possible to reach a final understanding with Gafencu on the question of introducing the appropriate changes in the Treaty. Concerning points 6 and 7, Turkey is herself ready to assume the obligation envisaged by them. Concerning point 8, Turkey would prefer to take part in a general agreement with England, France and the USSR as set out in the preceding points. However, she would like to have her obligations limited, in keeping with the practical possibilities of her participation in the contemplated system of mutual assistance. In particular, Turkey could not undertake to render assistance to the Baltic States and Poland.

Potemkin

From the archives.

No. 272. Letter from the Vice-Director of the Political Department of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Poland to the Polish Ambassador in Rumania *

May 4, 1939

In connection with the latest trip of Minister Gafencu our Missions have sent us the following reports on the results of his meetings and conversations.

Ambassador Lipski reports that during Minister Gafencu's conversation with Chancellor Hitler the latter, according to Minister Gafencu, spoke harshly about Poland and indicated that Germany's latest proposal¹⁰⁸ had been exceptionally favourable for Poland. Chancellor Hitler spoke in a rather aggressive manner about England as well. The Chancellor, and also Goering, posed the issue of the colonies very sharply. In referring to Rumania, the Chancellor emphasized his economic interests in the country, and from this Mr. Gafencu concluded that at present Hitler had no other aims (i.e., political, aims) in the South-East. The Chancellor spoke of Hungary without particular sympathy.

In summing up, Mr. Gafencu notes that at present German demands concern primarily the colonies. Gdansk is a dangerous point. He also fears possible complications in the Mediterranean.

In reply to Ambassador Lipski's question as to the truth of the rumours about Germany offering guarantees to Rumania, Gafencu replied that he had not raised this question since he did not wish to

* R. Raczynski.

give the German side an opportunity of bringing up political demands.

Minister Gafencu then informed Ambassador Lipski of his statements to the Chancellor and to Ribbentrop made in connection with the conversation he had had with the Minister * during his journey from Cracow to Katowice. Referring to that conversation, he confirmed that neither Poland nor Rumania was linked to any blocs aimed at encircling the Reich. He was aware that the Minister wanted, as hitherto, to maintain good relations with Germany and to conduct negotiations with her. Mr. Gafencu went on to indicate that neither Poland nor Rumania wanted to associate herself with the Soviets.

Ambassador Raczynski reports from London that Minister Gafencu told him he was convinced that the English Government did not wish to establish close relations with the Soviets. Minister Gafencu believes that the present Anglo-Soviet negotiations will yield no concrete results.

Ambassador Lukasiewicz reports that Minister Gafencu told him that the interpretation of the Polish-Rumanian Alliance⁹⁹ which was made during the journey from Cracow to Katowice was received with satisfaction by the French and English Governments. Minister Gafencu also said he was convinced that Germany would try to settle quickly the question of Gdansk, and that he seriously feared that to this end the German Government might resort to force even in the very near future. In all his discussions Minister Gafencu took a position in respect of the Soviet Union which is identical with that of Poland. In reply to a question from Ambassador Lukasiewicz, Minister Gafencu said that the Rumanian Government had until now received no proposals from the German side about the granting of guarantees similar to the French and English guarantees, but that he could see no reason why he should reject such guarantees since it had already accepted guarantees from England and France. He then added that the denunciation by Germany of the Non-Aggression Pact with Poland¹¹⁰ had altered the situation and that in this connection the above-mentioned question required further study.

In connection with the statement made by Ambassador Wieniawa-Dlugoszowski ** that Chancellor Hitler's latest speech had in no way altered our fundamental position as regards Soviet Russia, Minister Gafencu told Ambassador Wieniawa that he had already been apprised of this by Ambassador Franassovici. ***

In his conversation with Mussolini Minister Gafencu emphasized that Poland was taking an exceptionally tranquil position and that, like Rumania, she was invariably hostile to any ideological blocs and was therefore opposed to a rapprochement with the USSR.

* A reference to Gafencu's conversation with Beck.

** Polish Ambassador in Italy.

*** Rumanian Ambassador in Poland.

According to Minister Gafencu, Mussolini in his conversation with him had shown great sympathy for Poland; but at the same time he had expressed fear that since Hitler had openly raised the question of Gdansk he would not want to retreat, and an armed conflict caused by the implacability of the Poles could be fraught with unforeseen complications and consequences. Minister Gafencu stated in reply that he hoped it might still be possible to reach an understanding.

The conversations he had had in Rome, led Minister Gafencu to conclude that Italy will not actively intervene in a possible conflict.

The Ministry feels that by his open, calm and resolute stand Minister Gafencu has won the confidence of London and Paris and has achieved positive results.

Vice-Director
of the Political Department
Kobylanski

From the archives.

No. 273. Telegram from the Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the USSR

Ankara, May 5, 1939

Today Terentyev and I were received by Ismet Inonu in the presence of Sarajoglu. Our conversation lasted about one and a half hours. Ismet began by noting the positive result of our meetings in Ankara. He asked us to convey his thanks to the Soviet Government for the method of contact we had chosen. He believes Soviet-Turkish friendship is entering a new phase. The Turkish Government is profoundly gratified by the USSR Government's attitude to Turkey's negotiations with England and, in particular, to the contemplated Anglo-Turkish agreement on mutual assistance in the Mediterranean.¹¹¹ In Ismet's view, this agreement, like the rallying of the Balkan countries for opposing aggression, can crush the Axis and save the general peace. Of great significance in this connection is Bulgaria. Every effort must be made to persuade Rumania, despite her vacillation and the personal resistance of the King, to cede Dobrudja to Bulgaria. If this were done, then at least the neutrality of Bulgaria could be guaranteed. Inseparably linked with Bulgaria's position is the fate of Yugoslavia. The latter is "languishing in the embrace" of Italy and Germany. If she sees that Bulgaria is joining the Balkan Entente⁸² she will begin actively to defend her independence. Ismet specially requested me to stop over in Sofia and make

it clear to Kiosseivanoff* that never and under no circumstances would it be possible to range the USSR against Turkey, and that without the closest possible co-operation of our two countries peace in the Balkans could not be assured. If Bulgaria bowed to German pressure she would perish as an independent state and a free nation.

Referring to the position of the Great Western Powers, Ismet noted that at first they had not only failed to oppose German expansion in Eastern Europe, but had even seen in it a way of staying aloof from the military conflict, letting Germany wear herself out in clashes in the East and of securing for themselves the role of masters and arbitrators of the destinies of Europe. But England and France had miscalculated. After Germany's seizure of Austria, Czechoslovakia and Klaipeda and after Italy's occupation of Albania, the small nations, having convinced themselves of the inaction of the Great Western Powers, had lost all hopes of receiving their assistance and were prepared to capitulate to the aggressors. According to Ismet, France and England are beginning to realize the very great danger which this situation poses for themselves. Germany has no reason to attack the USSR. Moreover, the Soviet Union is shielded from Germany by its limitrophe countries. Having increased their economic power and their military potential many times over by seizures of "living space" in the Eastern part of Europe, Germany and Italy would hurl themselves upon the Western Powers. Turkish military circles are convinced that the most immediate danger threatens France. England and France have decided to organize opposition to the aggressors. They have offered their guarantees to Poland and Rumania.** They have entered into negotiations with Turkey and the USSR. In Ismet's opinion, the USSR should not reject the offer of co-operation. Its self-isolation would do incalculable harm to the cause of peace. The world public should realize that no important foreign policy problem in Europe could be resolved without the participation of the Soviet Union. All the efforts of Turkey are directed towards that end.

Turkey will seek to carry out her ultimate programme set out in the document of April 25,*** which basically coincides with the Soviet proposals made to the French and the English.**** However, the latter are making a very slow start and are moving forward in small steps. At present they are apparently still undecided about concluding an open alliance with the USSR. However, they are bound to associate themselves with the Soviet Union in a common struggle against the aggressors.

Incidentally, in his conversations with General Weygand Ismet had argued that without the USSR's support France could not defend herself against Germany. There was even more reason why the

* Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria.

** See Documents Nos. 201, 228, 229.

*** See Document No. 264.

**** See Document No. 239.

USSR's participation in the organization of defence against aggression in Eastern Europe and in the Balkans should be a decisive factor.

Ismet also mentioned the subject of the Black Sea Pact. He promised to consider that problem in all seriousness and sincerity. For Turkey herself it could be resolved favourably and quite simply. There were but two difficulties that had to be overcome. Firstly, Rumania would have to be reconciled with Bulgaria. Secondly, the Black Sea Treaty would have to be concerted with the Balkan Pact. The Turkish Government would make every effort to find ways to settle all these questions. However, the eventual conclusion of the Black Sea Pact did not obviate the need for the USSR and Turkey to conclude agreements with France and England in terms of joint defence against Italy and Germany.

Ismet was willing to assume that Turkey might be the first to be attacked by Germany. He agreed with the Soviet Government that such an attack would be most likely to come from the North, through Rumania and Bulgaria. It would be important for Ismet to know beforehand what assistance the Soviet Union would offer him in that event. England and France were promising Turkey a great deal; but even with the best of intentions, they would not be in a position to render Turkey genuine aid if a war should break out that would sever communications between Turkey and the West. Ismet was pinning great hopes on the railroad link between Turkey and the USSR via Erzerum and Sarykamysh. However, that was insufficient. Turkey needed aid in the form of armaments, manpower, aviation and naval forces. Pending an answer to his question about our military assistance Ismet would like to ask the Soviet Government to meet Turkey's request for the sale of certain essential items. A list of these items had already been communicated to Apaydin. In particular the Finance Minister was strongly backing the request for the sale of 20,000 tons of sugar to Turkey. As for more important military supplies, Turkey needed tanks, planes, anti-tank artillery, lorries, tractors and, most important, petrol. Ismet explained that this was not a question of supplying large quantities but rather of replenishing what Turkey already had. If Turkey could count on such assistance from the Soviet Union she could withstand a confrontation with fascist Germany.

Ismet had already told the English that Turkey considered it necessary to conclude a bilateral Soviet-Turkish pact. He believed that in effect Turkey and the USSR were already allies. That alliance could be legally formalized whenever the two Governments considered it necessary. In conclusion, Ismet, visibly moved, asked that his warm thanks be conveyed to Comrades Stalin, Molotov, Voroshilov and Kalinin for the confidence and friendship with which they were treating Turkey and for the sincerity and forthrightness displayed during the latest talks at Ankara.

Potemkin

From the archives.

**No. 274. Telegram from a Soviet Military Intelligence Officer
in Japan to the General Staff of the Red Army**

May 5, 1939

As German Ambassador Ott has learned from the Japanese General Staff, the difficulties within the Japanese Government itself in connection with the negotiations on the conclusion of a Japanese-German-Italian alliance⁵³ are confirmed by the fact that Arita and the naval circles have put forward their own plan for the conclusion of an alliance ensuring adequate security and guarantees which would be put into effect in the event of the alliance being involved in a war against England or America. Arita and the naval circles are ready to conclude a general and unconditional pact of defence against any state that might start a war against any of the three countries signing the Anti-Comintern Pact, even if England, America or France should be involved in that war.

But the naval circles and Arita refuse to conclude a pact that would openly declare itself to be directed not only against the USSR, but also against England and other countries. Besides the official text of the allied pact of the three countries, Arita and the naval circles are drawing up a special secret appendage to it. In that secret appendage the articles of the pact will be broadened, envisaging also action against any country. They want to avoid overt friction with England and America by not publishing the text of a pact which plainly states that it is directed not only against the USSR.

The General Staff has said that Arita will resign unless his viewpoint is accepted, and it has hinted to German Ambassador Ott that the General Staff could not assume the responsibility for a split in the present Government over a difference of opinions, and it is hoping that the German side will also insist on the basic articles of the agreement. Ambassador Ott has telegraphed this to Berlin.

Ramzai

From the archives

**No. 275. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in France to
the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of
the USSR**

May 6, 1939

I have received confirmation that England is still balking at concluding a tripartite agreement with us.¹¹²

On May 3 Bonnet gave Halifax, through Corbin, a lengthy memorandum in which he replied to the English objections and again insisted on his draft being accepted. In the memorandum he cited the favourable responses of the General Staff and assured the English that his draft had been "favourably received in Moscow" (where he got that I do not know).

On May 4 in a conversation with Corbin Halifax, "though he did not give a final reply," nonetheless "tended towards a refusal". According to Halifax, a tripartite agreement with the USSR's participation, even in the curtailed form suggested by Bonnet, could "lead to and aggravate complications in Europe". As before, he suggested that the most that could be agreed on would be "parallel" actions through unilateral declarations. According to Corbin's information, Halifax is himself undecided and is inclined to accept an agreement, but this is opposed by Chamberlain who is backed by Simon and Hoare.

Ambassador

From the archives.

**No. 276. Minute from the Counsellor of the German Embassy
in Poland for the Intelligence Service of a Western
Power**

May 7, 1939

Within the last few days the following persons have come to Warsaw: (1) Kleist, one of Ribbentrop's closest associates, whose mission is to assess the mood in Poland; (2) the German Air Attaché in Warsaw, Colonel Gerstenberg, who has returned after a briefing visit to Berlin; (3) the German Ambassador in Warsaw, von Moltke, who had been delayed for almost a whole month in Berlin on Hitler's instructions, and who has at present returned to his post having received no directives as to Germany's future policy in respect of Poland. Kleist and Gerstenberg have given identical information about Germany's present plans. Moltke said in reply to a question that he, too, had heard in Berlin about some parts of those plans.

The information brought by Kleist and Gerstenberg attests to the following.

A German strike against Poland has been in the planning stage since 1938. In connection with that action no attempt was made to prevent the incorporation of the Teschen area into Poland as a result of which relations between the Czechs and the Poles were expected to deteriorate for a long time to come, which has in fact taken place. Also in connection with the contemplated strike against

Poland, permission for the establishment of a common Polish-Hungarian border was, at first, refused. Such a permission was granted only later in order to show Hungary that the decision rested not with Poland but with Germany.

The German measures in Slovakia—the creation of a Protectorate and the military occupation—are part of the broad military plan aimed at enveloping Poland from the north and the south. The fact that the German proposal to Poland was handed to the Polish Ambassador in Berlin several hours after the occupation of Memel was explained by Germany's design to place Poland in a position that ruled out her acceptance of that proposal.¹⁰⁸ And if Poland had accepted the proposal, Hitler would have tied in his first visit to Memel with his first visit to Danzig. However, this would not have led to any changes in the broad German plan directed against Poland.

In the opinion of German military circles, preparation of the strike against Poland will not be completed before the end of July. It has been planned to start the offensive with a sudden bombing attack on Warsaw which is to be reduced to ruins. The first wave of bomber squadrons is to be followed six hours later by a second, so as to complete the destruction. A time-limit of 14 days has been set for the subsequent rout of the Polish army.

In preparation for the attack on Poland a vast press and radio propaganda campaign has been planned. In it a certain role will be assigned, for instance, to the sexual crimes and to the self-enrichment of Polish leaders, as well as to the exploitation of peasants and workers by the ruling regime.

Furthermore, all preparatory measures have been taken to stage an insurrection in Eastern Galicia, which in this case would be used as a pretext for intervention. The Berlin-Lwow communication link is functioning excellently, notably through the German Youth Party in Poland. The resentment of the Ukrainians over the fact that the Carpatho-Ukraine has been left to the mercy of fate has been removed. Hungary will be prompted to grant the Ukrainian population certain autonomous rights.

Hungarian support can be counted on since Hungary will get Slovakia and will be placed under German protection together with Slovakia. When this is carried out the German army will reach the Rumanian frontier and will thus be able to put pressure on the Rumanians, whose attitude has been causing concern in Berlin.

In Berlin no one now thinks in terms of solving the Polish question on the basis of Hitler's March proposal. Any new Polish proposals would be turned down by Germany. At present the German minimum programme includes the incorporation of the entire Corridor and, if possible, also Upper Silesia and large portions of Poznan Province, especially her important agricultural regions. Although the new slogan advanced by Hitler is "strategical safeguarding of the frontiers", at the same time this means "extension of the supply base." In general, the shortage of all types of raw materials is the main impetus for Germany's present swift actions. On his birthday

(April 20) Hitler informed a narrow circle of his associates that the implementation of the entire programme must now be speeded up. Hitler is certain that neither England nor France will interfere in the German-Polish conflict.

When Poland will have been dealt with, Germany will throw her entire might against the Western Democracies, break their hegemony and simultaneously assign Italy a more modest role. The breaking of the resistance of the Western Democracies will be followed by Germany's great clash with Russia as a result of which Germany's requirements in living space and raw materials will finally be satisfied.

For a correct assessment of this information it is necessary to note the following. It is beyond all doubt that the above ideas have been discussed by leading Berlin circles as guidelines for the coming implementation of the German plans. It is possible that an attempt to carry out Germany's plans will be made as set out above. On the other hand, however, it must be borne in mind that on the subject of tactics, experience has shown that the thinking of the leaders of the Reich is liable to change quickly and that each new tactical concept is presented by various confidants as being the latest and ultimate wisdom.

[R. von Schelliah]

From the archives.

No. 277. Memorandum of a Conversation Between the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR * and the Polish Ambassador in the USSR

May 8, 1939

I asked M. Grzybowski whether he was familiar with the proposal which the Soviet Government had made to England and France in connection with the present international situation,** and then told him that information was reaching us to the effect that the Polish Government had taken a negative stand on the proposal. I had therefore invited Grzybowski to acquaint himself with the text of the USSR's proposal and also to tell me what was it in the proposal that Poland considered to be bad for her, and whether it was true that Poland was one of the main opponents of the proposal. Grzybowski read the text of the proposal I had handed to him (the eight points and the introduction to them).

* V. M. Molotov.

** See Document No. 239.

After reading the text of the proposal Grzybowski said he knew the content of the Soviet Government's proposal but point 4 (calling on England to declare that her latest mutual assistance agreement with Poland* was directed exclusively against Germany) was new to him. The Ambassador said that Poland had not adopted negative attitude to the proposal and that this was the business of the three States—England, France and the USSR. He did, however, have some doubts about points 4 and 5. The Ambassador went into a long discourse about the special position of Poland, which was situated between two great neighbours, and [said] that Poland did not want to take any steps that might be interpreted by Germany as acts designed to provoke aggression on her part. He also emphasized that it was one of Poland's principal aims to preserve her long-standing good relations with Hungary which was now being threatened with a Czechoslovakia-like situation and which Poland was still hoping to keep from going over to Germany's camp. In this connection Grzybowski said that to achieve this last-mentioned goal, too, Poland should do nothing to repel Hungary towards Germany.

Grzybowski objected to point 4, arguing that it was wrong to demand that the Anglo-Polish agreement be interpreted as being directed exclusively against Germany. He also indicated that theoretically it could be assumed that Germany would begin aggressive actions against Poland not directly but, say, by using for that purpose Rumania, and so forth. I pointed out that this argument was not serious and said that if the question was one of mutual assistance against aggression, it was clearly necessary to state straightforwardly that the Anglo-Polish agreement was directed precisely against Germany. I also pointed out the unacceptability of a situation where, on the one hand, the USSR was expected to participate in guarantees for Poland while, on the other, an Anglo-Polish mutual assistance agreement had been concluded which could be interpreted as being directed, *inter alia*, against the USSR, instead of against the aggressor, that is, against Germany.

Grzybowski objected to point 5 of the Soviet proposals (on either imparting to the Polish-Rumanian Treaty of 1926⁹⁹ a general nature directed against any aggression or else annulling the Treaty altogether). He regarded the proposal to annul the Treaty as a "diktat", that is, as the imposition of an alien will. As for imparting to the Treaty the nature of being directed against any aggression so as to deprive it of its anti-Soviet edge, Grzybowski objected to this as well. He tried to argue that since the text of the Treaty was not directed against any Power, it was therefore not directed against the USSR. At the same time, he did not deny that in the past the Treaty had been given a political significance as being directed against the USSR. I suggested to the Ambassador that the Poles should consider ways to remove the anti-Soviet political significance of the Treaty which was not in accordance with the present-day situation.

* See Document No. 213.

This the Ambassador promised to do.

With marked interest the Ambassador raised the question of our position *vis-à-vis* Bessarabia. To this I responded that Rumania had nothing to worry about on this score, particularly at the present time.

In conclusion I handed to him the text of our proposal to the English and the French, for which he thanked me.

The conversation lasted about one and a half hours.

From the archives.

No. 278. Memorandum of a Conversation Between the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR and the Ambassador of Britain in the USSR

May 8, 1939

The Ambassador began the conversation by asking whether Litvinov's resignation from the post of People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs implied any change in the Soviet Union's foreign policy.

I answered that the Soviet Government's position as set out in its 8-point proposal* which had been communicated both to the English and to the French Governments remained unchanged. Further on in the conversation I made it clear that the Soviet Government's position on questions relating to the international situation, as set out in the 8 points, remained unchanged so long as there were no changes in the international situation and in the positions of other powers.

The Ambassador then handed to me an aide-mémoire of the British Government,** in English with an appended Russian translation, in which the British Government sets out, in a somewhat revised form, the original proposal it had made to the Soviet Government.

In handing over the British Government's proposal, the Ambassador spoke of the sincere desire of his Government for co-operation with the Soviet Government. He said that Halifax saw no fundamental difference between the Soviet Government's proposal and the present proposal of the British Government, and that the difference between those proposals was of a formal nature. At the same time the Ambassador said that well composed and logical as the Soviet proposal was, at the present critical moment questions

* See Document No. 239.

** See Document No. 279.

of form were of great significance. The Ambassador explained the general line of the British Government as follows: to do nothing that might be interpreted by Germany as an act designed to provoke aggression on her part and at the same time to take measures to erect a barrier against aggressive actions. Hence, he said, the special importance of the form of actions by the peace-loving Powers.

I then put several questions to Seeds. In connection with Seeds' observation that Poland was negatively disposed towards the aforementioned proposal of the Soviet Government, I said that we had other information about Poland's position. Seeds did not try to refute my statement but repeated his assertion about Poland in more general and vague terms.

I asked whether the British Government's position had changed after the well-known statement by Simon who had declared in the House of Commons that in principle a military agreement with the USSR was acceptable to England. Seeds tried to dodge a reply to this question by saying that he was unaware of that statement and that Simon was not the Foreign Secretary. But he said that consideration of this question, too, was not excluded in the future.

In reply to my question whether the British Government was anticipating the conclusion of any military convention between England and the USSR, apart from a declaration by the Soviet Government, Seeds said evasively that this was a matter for the future.

In reply to my question whether England had offered any guarantees to Belgium, Holland and Switzerland, Seeds said that the question of these countries, which were situated in the West, did not relate to the question under review, and that in the past all the wars in which England had taken part had been closely linked with the destinies of Belgium and Holland.

In reply to my question whether the British Government was familiar with the French Government's proposal* in connection with the draft of the Soviet Government,** Seeds said that France communicated the relevant drafts to England and vice versa.

In reply to the question whether England's present proposal had been concerted with France, Seeds limited himself to the observation that England was aware of France's proposals while France was aware of England's proposals.

At the close of the conversation I said that the British Government's proposal would be examined by the Soviet Government and a reply would be given to it.

The conversation lasted about one hour.

From the archives.

* See Document No. 262.

** See Document No. 239.

No. 279. Aide-Mémoire Handed by the Ambassador of Britain
in the USSR to the People's Commissar for Foreign
Affairs of the USSR

May 8, 1939

In the task of erecting a barrier against aggression in Eastern Europe by making arrangements for the safety of those States most directly menaced, His Majesty's Government would always attach great importance to the association with their efforts of the Soviet Government. They are, in fact, fully conscious that the support that might be afforded by the Soviet Government to Eastern European countries would be of the utmost value in case of war, and that the prospect of such support would act as a powerful deterrent against aggression. Their whole effort has accordingly been directed to finding means by which certain difficulties inherent in the situation may be avoided or overcome. It was with this purpose that His Majesty's Government proposed that the Soviet Government should of their own volition make a declaration* which, they are convinced, would steady the situation by showing the willingness of the Soviet Government to collaborate without causing immediate difficulties to those whom it is desired to help. By this proposal the Soviet Government would lend their assistance in whatever form seemed most desirable to States, victims of aggression and themselves determined to resist, who wished to take advantage of it. The original proposal made to the Soviet Government was designed for the purpose of giving effect to this idea.

His Majesty's Government have, however, in the light of the Soviet counter-proposal** and of their consultations with other Governments, revised the proposal which they originally made to the Soviet Government, and they would now submit it in the following form:

"It is suggested that the Soviet Government should make a public declaration on their own initiative, in which after referring to the general statement of policy recently made by M. Stalin and having regard to the statements recently made by His Majesty's Government and the French Government, accepting new obligations on behalf of certain Eastern European countries, the Soviet Government would undertake that in the event of Great Britain and France being involved in hostilities in fulfilment of these obligations, the assistance of the Soviet Government would be immediately available if desired and would be afforded in such manner and on such terms as might be agreed".

*From Documents on British Foreign
Policy, 1919-1939, Third Series,
Vol. V, London, 1952, p. 487.*

* See Document No. 233.

** See Document No. 239.

No. 280. Telegram from the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR to the Soviet Ambassador in France *

May 8, 1939

As you see, the English and the French are demanding of us unilateral and gratuitous assistance with no intention of rendering us equivalent assistance.¹¹³ This is very much like the insolent Bonnet-Léger formula ** later revised by Bonnet *** with which you are familiar. Seeds has said that the French Government has no objections to this English proposal. **** I take this to mean that the English proposal supersedes Bonnet's last proposal and thus the Bonnet-Léger formula is restored. We urgently need your assessment of the English proposal. Please telegraph your advice as to the reply our Government should give.

People's Commissar

From the archives.

No. 281. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in Britain to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the USSR

May 9, 1939

The present English proposal ***** which is basically a repetition of the British Government's proposal of April 15, ***** is explained by the fact that in the last ten days or so following Hitler's speech¹⁰⁹ the "appeasers" have once again raised their heads here. This is evidenced by, among other things, the large-scale campaign in *The Times* calling for "one more attempt" to come to terms with Germany and Italy. One clearly feels that there is a relapse to the Munich policy in government circles. I personally think that the proposal made to you yesterday by Seeds is unacceptable, but I feel the English have not yet said their last word.

Ambassador

From the archives.

* A similar telegram was sent to the Soviet Ambassador in Britain.
** See Document No. 253.
*** See Document No. 262.
**** See Document No. 279.
***** See Document No. 279.
***** See Document No. 233.

May 10, 1939

According to information received from London, Reuters News Agency has reported by wireless that the English reply* to the proposal of the USSR** contains the following fundamental counter-proposals: firstly, the Soviet Union must give a separate guarantee to each of the states bordering on it and, secondly, England undertakes to render assistance to the USSR if the latter should be involved in hostilities as a result of fulfilling the guarantees it had assumed. TASS has learned from authoritative Soviet sources that this report put out by Reuters Agency does not fully correspond to facts. On May 8 the Soviet Government did receive the British Government's counter-proposal to which the French Government does not object. In this proposal it is not stated that the Soviet Government must give a separate guarantee to each of the states bordering on the USSR. It is there stated that the Soviet Government must give immediate assistance to Great Britain and France in the event of their being involved in hostilities in fulfilment of obligations assumed by them with regard to Poland and Rumania. However, in this counter-proposal the British Government says nothing about assistance which the Soviet Union would receive from France and Great Britain on a basis of reciprocity if it should be similarly involved in hostilities in fulfilment of the obligations it had assumed with regard to some states in Eastern Europe.

From *Izvestia*, No. 107 (6877),
May 10, 1939.

No. 283. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in France to the
People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the USSR

May 10, 1939

You are right in saying that as regards its content the English proposal*** differs little from the first French draft, but it is even worse as regards its form. If the Bonnet-Léger formula**** actually imposed unilateral obligations on us, it was nonetheless worded as

* See Documents No. 278 and 279.

** See Document No. 239.

*** See Document No. 279.

**** See Document No. 253.

an agreement between the three countries and in its concluding part it envisaged the immediate establishment of contact between the General Staffs (in a veiled form). The proposal of the English, on the other hand, clearly reveals an unwillingness to get involved with us through any formal agreement, an unwillingness to place their signature side by side with ours on any document, and an unwillingness to go beyond "parallel" actions. It is still less acceptable to us than the Bonnet-Léger formula. It would automatically involve us in a war with Germany whenever England and France should choose to fight Germany under the obligations which they have assumed without our consent and which have not been concerted with us. They arrogate to no one but themselves the right to set both the time and the objectives of such a conflict. While assigning to us the role of a blind companion in this combination, they do not wish to guarantee us even against the consequences which our obligation would entail for us.

Ambassador

From the archives.

No. 284. Letter from the Soviet Ambassador in Britain to the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR

May 10, 1939

1. Undoubtedly the most characteristic phenomenon in the last ten or twelve days (after my return from Moscow) is the somewhat heightened activity in the camp of the advocates of the Munich policy. The formal pretext for this heightened activity was Hitler's speech of April 28,¹⁰⁹ but the real causes of the present return to "appeasement" lie much deeper. I have had more than one occasion to point out that the essence of Chamberlain's foreign policy is collusion with the aggressors at the expense of third countries. Since mid-March, however, the further and open pursuit of such a policy has become extremely difficult for the Premier. The elimination of Czechoslovakia, the annexation of Memel, the seizure of Albania, and Germany's economic and political offensive in the Balkans have, on the one hand, vividly shown how hard it was to strike a bargain with the aggressors at a reasonable price. On the other hand, they have given rise inside England to such sentiments among broad sections of the public as have made it hazardous for Chamberlain to pursue a straightforward policy of "appeasement". As a result, the Premier has had to manoeuvre, to retreat somewhat from his original positions, to declare the need to resist the aggressors and even to take

steps which are unusual for British policy, such as introducing conscription and offering guarantees to Poland, Rumania and Greece. Nonetheless it has been quite clear from the very beginning that Chamberlain adopted the so-called "new policy" most unwillingly, resisting at every step and all the time waiting for an opportunity to revert to what is for him the familiar path of "appeasement". And so for Chamberlain and his associates Hitler's speech of April 28, coupled with the fact that in the last three or four weeks neither Germany nor Italy had committed any new acts of overt aggression, seemed to provide an appropriate pretext for reanimating the Munich sentiments.

2. This return to "appeasement" is manifested in various ways. It began, as always, with *The Times*. Since the first days of May this newspaper, which maintains extremely close ties with the Premier and his entourage, has been publishing a series of letters to the editor from prominent advocates of the Munich policy (Lord Rushbrook, James Marriott and others) who argue that Hitler's speech "opens the door" to new talks with Germany and that "one more attempt" should be made to come to terms with the aggressors. Simultaneously quite a few newspapers began to publish clearly inspired reports to the effect that unconditional acceptance of the Soviet proposal* would be dangerous, for an "alliance with the USSR" might irritate Japan, upset General Franco, and alienate from England her old ally, Portugal. Again, as several months previously, there appeared in government circles the familiar overtones of "appeasement". Chamberlain, who has been bombarded throughout the last week in Parliament with questions from the Opposition concerning the progress of the Anglo-Soviet talks, began to lose his temper and uttered rude remarks verging on open insolence. But the most important indication of the return to "appeasement" was the British Government's reply to our proposal which was handed to you by Seeds on May 8.**

3. How durable and serious is this relapse? The answer to this question will depend above all on the moves Hitler and Mussolini will make in the immediate future. Every new act of aggression on their part must inevitably be a blow to the present revival of the Munich sentiments in certain London circles and compel even Chamberlain to return to the policy of organizing a bloc against the aggressor. Specifically, this should mean acceptance by the British Government of the substance of our proposal. For this very reason it may be expected that in the immediate future Chamberlain will spare no effort to settle "peacefully" the more acute questions of the moment, such as the question of Danzig. However, it is doubtful that a new Munich is even possible at present for, on the one hand, the appetites of Hitler and Mussolini seem to have outgrown such "backward" political methods, and, on the other hand, a repetition of Mu-

* See Document No. 239.

** See Document No. 279.

nich would evoke in England herself a reaction which the present Government would probably be unable to survive. Indeed, the broad masses—not only the workers but also the petty bourgeoisie and middle bourgeoisie, and even a sizable part of the bourgeois upper crust—are definitely and strongly anti-German and are demanding resistance to the aggressors. In other words the broad masses are in favour of a military alliance with the USSR. Several days ago the Institute of Public Opinion, which registers the fluctuations of public sentiments in England, conducted a new poll which gave the following result: 87 per cent of all those questioned supported the idea of an immediate alliance with the USSR. Also extremely curious was the reaction in this country to Comrade Litvinov's resignation. For the first three days the entire English press engaged in intensive speculation over the reasons for the resignation and the significance of that fact. All sorts of theories, at times quite fantastic, were put forward. However, underlying all these speculations was one anxious question: did this mean a change in Soviet policy? Did it mean the renunciation by the USSR of co-operation with England and France? And this anxiety was not only voiced in the press. I know that on May 4, the day after Comrade Litvinov's resignation became known in England, there was real panic in the Foreign Office. Feelings there began to quiet down somewhat only after May 5, when reassuring reports were received from Seeds to the effect that Comrade Litvinov's resignation in no way implied a change in Soviet policy. But, as you know, even in the morning of the 6th Halifax deemed it necessary to ask me quite officially whether the foreign policy which the USSR had been pursuing until then remained in force. Finally, yet another extremely important factor should be noted. England has already offered guarantees to Poland, Rumania and Greece. She is already committed. But it is clear even to a child that the carrying out of these guarantees is unthinkable without active co-operation of the USSR. Renunciation of such co-operation by the USSR in the present situation, at a time when all three above-mentioned countries are under a threat, would mean either a military defeat for England and France (should they decide to fulfil their obligations), or such a severe blow at their prestige (should they fail to fulfil their obligations), that not only would they lose much of their influence in the international sphere, but their colonial empires would begin to disintegrate in the not too distant future. My conclusion is that the present return to the policy of "appeasement" will not last long and that the logic of events will compel England to take the path of resisting the aggressors.

Ambassador of the USSR
in Britain
I. Maisky

From the archives.

No. 285. Telegram from the Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the USSR

Warsaw, May 10, 1939

I had an hour-long conversation with Beck. I received some information about the state of Polish-German relations. By going into a detailed analysis of the balance of forces in Europe and the possibilities of effective Franco-English assistance to Poland I brought Beck to admit outright that without the support of the USSR the Poles could never hold out. As is my custom, I summed up the gist of our talk at the close of the conversation, and I pointedly reiterated this statement by Beck and he confirmed it. For my part, I emphasized that the USSR would not refuse assistance to Poland if she desired it. I shall inform you about the conversation in greater detail upon my return.

Potemkin

From the archives.

No. 286. Telegram from the US Ambassador in France to the US Secretary of State *

May 10, 1939

[...] Both Bonnet and the British Ambassador are optimistic with regard to the future. They both believe that the inclusion of the Soviet Union, Turkey, Rumania and Poland in the front against German aggression, plus the increasing in military strength of England and France, plus the growing economic and financial difficulties in Germany and Italy, will make it evident in another 2 months that the balance of force is definitely against Germany and Italy. They believe that Germany and Italy are already so uncertain about the balance of force that they will not dare to make war. They both expect a number of crises in the coming month; but believe that in the end Germany and Italy will be compelled to negotiate on approximately the basis proposed by the President in his message to Hitler and Mussolini.¹⁰⁴

Incidentally the British Ambassador said to me today, as he has said to me twice recently, that his Government had only one fear at the present moment.

Ribbentrop, to the certain knowledge of the British Government,

* Abridged.

was engaged in attempting to prove to Hitler that Germany could make war on France and England with impunity since it was certain that England and France could not even obtain military supplies from the United States. The recent debates on the Neutrality Act⁴¹ were being cited [by] Ribbentrop as proof that the United States in case of war would sell no military supplies or airplanes to France and England. The British Government therefore considered it of the highest importance that the modification of the Neutrality Act should if possible be brought about in the near future. Such a modification of the Neutrality Act would end all chance that Ribbentrop might persuade Hitler to risk immediate war. Bonnet said the same thing to me last night.

Bullitt

From *Foreign Relations of the United States, Diplomatic Papers, 1939*, Vol. I, Washington, 1956, pp. 184-185.

No. 287. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in Estonia to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the USSR

May 10, 1939

According to information received, military fortifications are being erected at a forced pace near the mouth of the Narva and 10-inch guns are being installed. Work is carried on round the clock. The construction is similar to the German Siegfried system. The operations are being directed by Germans together with the chief of Estonian counter-intelligence, Masing.

Ambassador

From the archives.

No. 288. "On the International Situation": an Editorial in "Izvestia"

May 11, 1939

In recent weeks certain events have taken place that have substantially changed the situation in Europe. We have in mind, first, Hitler's latest speech in the Reichstag¹⁰⁹ and, second, the conclu-

sion of a politico-military alliance between Italy and Germany.¹¹⁴ Western politicians are saying that these two events have led to no changes in the situation in Europe. This is, of course, wrong. What is more, it is a falsehood, for such assertions are designed to mislead public opinion. In fact, these two events have brought about a turn for the worst in the entire political situation.

Hitler's statement in the Reichstag has resulted in the abrogation of two of the most important treaties which had until now regulated relations between England and Germany, on the one hand, and between Germany and Poland, on the other. There was a Naval Treaty between England and Germany.³ After Hitler's statement the Treaty was no more. There was a Treaty of Non-Aggression between Poland and Germany.²² After Hitler's statement this Treaty was no more. How can anyone assert that the sudden elimination of two such important treaties has caused no changes in the international situation?

As regards the conclusion of a politico-military alliance between Italy and Germany, this fact has caused a further deterioration of the situation that had existed prior to this act in Europe. Before the conclusion of this Treaty Germany and Italy represented two "parallel" policies which, the laws of geometry notwithstanding, quite frequently drew together towards a single axis, but they did not necessarily have to draw together. Some states even harboured hopes of, or went so far as to base their policy on detaching Italy from Germany and isolating Germany. Now an end has been put to such hopes and policies. There are no longer any two "parallel" policies. Now Europe will be dealing with a single general and military policy, a German-Italian policy, whose edge, as the authors of the Treaty say themselves, is directed against England and France. How can anyone assert that this important event has caused no changes in the situation in Europe?

The Soviet people have said on more than one occasion that the Anti-Comintern Pact²⁴ uniting Germany, Italy and Japan was a mask concealing a bloc of aggressive states against England and France. The Soviet people were not believed, they were ridiculed. Now, however, it is clear to all that the conversion of the Anti-Comintern Pact of Germany and Italy into a politico-military alliance of those states against England and France is an unquestionable fact.

There is no doubt that after the seizure of Czechoslovakia and Albania, the abrogation of these two treaties by Germany and the conclusion of a politico-military alliance between Germany and Italy are two most serious events that have fundamentally worsened the situation in Europe.

Owing to these circumstances the democratic states have stepped up their search for ways and means of forming a united peace front against the spreading aggression.

They have also led to negotiations between England and France,

on the one hand, and the USSR, on the other, on the subject of organizing an effective peace front against aggression.

Foreign politicians and journalists have been circulating all kinds of slanderous rumours about the USSR's position in these negotiations, ascribing to the USSR the demand for the conclusion of a direct military alliance with England and France, and almost for the immediate start of military actions against the aggressors. There is no need to prove that this is absurd and that it has nothing in common with the position of the USSR. The USSR has felt, and continues to feel, that if France and England really want to establish a barrier against aggression in Europe, there must be created a united front of mutual assistance above all among the four main powers in Europe—England, France, the USSR and Poland—or at least among three powers—England, France and the USSR—so that these three countries, bound on a reciprocal basis by a mutual assistance pact, could provide guarantees to other states in Eastern and Central Europe which are threatened by aggression.*

This clear-cut fundamentally defensive and peace-loving position of the USSR, based, moreover, on the principle of reciprocity and equal obligations, has failed to meet with a sympathetic response from England and France. As is known, England, with French approval, has come out with a counter-proposal.** In her proposal England sidesteps the question of a mutual assistance pact between France, England and the USSR and believes that the Soviet Government should render immediate assistance to England and France in the event of their being involved in hostilities in fulfilment of their obligations to guarantee Poland and Rumania. But England makes no mention of the assistance which the USSR ought to receive, proceeding from the principle of reciprocity, from France and England if it should find itself involved in hostilities in fulfilment of its obligations to guarantee certain states in Eastern Europe.

It therefore appears that in this combination the USSR is supposed to find itself in an unequal position, although it would have the same obligations as France and England. This is not to mention the fact that the most important question of the actual repulsion of aggression and the time for beginning such action is in this combination left entirely for England and France to decide, although the burden of such repulsion would fall mainly on the USSR because of its geographical position.

It has been argued that in defending Poland and Rumania, England and France would in fact be defending the western frontier of the USSR. This is not true. Firstly, the western frontier of the USSR is not limited to Poland and Rumania. Secondly, and this is most important, in defending Poland and Rumania, England and France would be defending themselves, and not the western frontier of the USSR, as they have a mutual assistance pact with Poland, which, in

* See Document No. 239.

** See Document No. 279.

turn, is committed to defending England and France against aggression. As regards Rumania, since she has a treaty of alliance with Poland,⁹⁹ she would have to follow Poland, that is, she would actually have to play the part of an indirect ally of England and France. But things are different with the USSR. Having no mutual assistance pact either with England and France or with Poland, the USSR would be obliged to render assistance to all these three states, but without receiving any assistance from them, and in the event of direct aggression against the USSR, the latter would have to rely entirely on its own strength.

It turns out that the USSR would again find itself in an unequal position.

In his statement of May 10 in the House of Commons, Premier Chamberlain of Great Britain spoke of co-operation and alliance with the USSR, but co-operation implies reciprocity. Where there is no reciprocity, there can be no real co-operation.

From *Izvestia*, No. 108 (6878),
May 11, 1939.

No. 289. Memorandum of a Conversation Between the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR and the Ambassador of Poland in the USSR

May 11, 1939

I received the Ambassador at his own request. Grzybowski began the conversation by apologizing for having inaccurately informed me during our last conversation* as to the Polish Government's position in respect of the Soviet Government's proposal to Britain and France.** In expressing his generally positive attitude to the proposal during our last meeting, he had inaccurately set out the Polish Government's position. The Ambassador read out from a piece of paper the instructions he had received from Warsaw. Two points in those instructions deserve attention. Firstly, the Polish Government states that the French initiative in the negotiations regarding guarantees to Poland does not accord with the point of view of the Polish Government which feels that it alone can conduct such negotiations, and has not authorized France to conduct them. Secondly, Poland does not consider it possible to conclude a mutual assistance pact with the USSR in view of the practical impossibility for Poland to

* See Document No. 277.

** See Document No. 239.

render assistance to the Soviet Union. In the meantime, Poland proceeds from the principle that a mutual assistance pact can be concluded only on conditions of reciprocity. At the same time, in reply to my question the Ambassador said that Poland could not oppose the conclusion of a mutual assistance pact between the USSR, England and France, believing that this was entirely up to those states themselves to decide.

When I asked whether Poland was interested in such a pact the Ambassador gave an evasive reply, and reread the instructions he had received. When I asked whether Poland was interested in guarantees for the European states bordering on the USSR, the Ambassador replied that this should not relate to Poland. He made it clear that he was saying this in the context of the present moment; in future the question might be seen in a different light.

The entire conversation shows that Poland does not wish at the present to bind herself through any agreement with the USSR or to consent to the participation of the USSR in guaranteeing Poland, though she does not exclude the latter in the future.

From the archives.

No. 290. Letter from the Counsellor of the German Embassy in Britain to the Director of the Economic Policy Department in the German Ministry for Foreign Affairs*

May 11, 1939

I would like to inform you briefly that Mr. Henry Drummond-Wolf** left for Berlin again yesterday. The visit is as before a purely private one but it is being undertaken with the knowledge of the Prime Minister's closest economic advisers. Drummond-Wolf intends to visit you.

He informed me in confidence that shortly before his departure he again saw Sir Horace Wilson, with whom he had quite a long conversation. He also told me in confidence that, in continuance of the conversations which he had conducted at the time in Berlin, Oliver Stanley had intended to bring up, during the visit to Berlin then proposed, the question of a partial renunciation by Britain of the most favoured nation rights in the Balkans in favour of Germany. He said he knew this for a fact.

* E. Wiehl.

** Conservative member of the British Parliament.

As Drummond-Wolff told me the above in confidence I would be grateful if you would not give him any indication that you are aware of it.

Selzam

From *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945, Series D, Vol. VI, p. 477.*

No. 291. Aide-Mémoire Handed by the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR to the Ambassador of Britain in the USSR

May 14, 1939

The Soviet Government has given careful consideration to the latest proposal of the Government of Great Britain which was handed to the Soviet Government on May 8,* and it has come to the conclusion that it cannot serve as a basis for organizing a front for resistance made up of peace-loving states against the further extension of aggression in Europe.

This conclusion is based on the following considerations:

1. The English proposal does not rest on the principle of reciprocity with regard to the USSR and places it in a position of inequality inasmuch as it does not oblige England and France to guarantee the USSR in the event of a direct attack on it by aggressors, whereas England and France as well as Poland do have such a guarantee on the basis of the reciprocity which exists between them.

2. The English proposal extends the guarantee to the East European states bordering on the USSR only to Poland and Rumania, thus leaving uncovered the north-western frontier of the USSR, where it borders on Finland, Estonia and Latvia.

3. The absence of guarantees to the USSR on the part of England and France in the event of a direct attack by aggressors, on the one hand, and the uncovered north-western frontier of the USSR, on the other, may serve as an element provoking aggression in the direction of the Soviet Union.

The Soviet Government believes that at least three conditions are required to create an effective barrier of peace-loving states against the further extension of aggression in Europe:

1. The conclusion between England, France and the USSR of an effective pact of mutual assistance against aggression;

2. The guaranteeing by these three great powers of the states of

* See Document No. 279.

Central and Eastern Europe threatened by aggression, including Latvia, Estonia and Finland;

3. The conclusion of a concrete agreement between England, France and the USSR on the forms and the extent of assistance to be rendered to each other and to the guaranteed states, for without such an agreement the mutual assistance pacts risk being left hanging in the air, as the experience of Czechoslovakia has shown.

From the archives.

No. 292. Telegram from the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR to the Soviet Ambassadors in Italy and Germany

May 14, 1939

The Soviet Government's reply* was handed to English Ambassador Seeds today. Our reply rejects the English Government's proposal of May 8 which suggested that we should by unilateral declaration guarantee our assistance to England and France in the event of their involvement in a war with Germany over Poland and Rumania, but which gave no guarantee to the USSR in the event of an attack on it by the aggressors. We are insisting on the principle of reciprocity in the matter of mutual assistance by England, France and the USSR, and on the extension of a joint guarantee by these three countries to all the countries of Eastern Europe bordering on the Soviet Union.

People's Commissar

From the archives.

No. 293. Memorandum of a Conversation Between the Counsellor of the Economic Policy Department in the German Ministry for Foreign Affairs and a Member of the British Conservative Party

May 14, 1939

On May 13 Ribbentrop's Secretariat (Baron von Geyr) asked me to hold myself in readiness for a conversation with Mr. H. Drummond-Wolff. I met him at his hotel on May 14 and had lunch with

* See Document No. 291.

him. He also gave me to understand, as he had the Embassy in London, that he was in Berlin with the knowledge of the close adviser of the British Cabinet, and asked me to treat our conversation as entirely confidential. I for my part said that I was only competent to deal with Anglo-German economic matters, and that if he wished to speak about political affairs no more value could be attached to my views than to those of a "man in the street."

Drummond-Wolff said further by way of introduction that, since his arrival in Berlin, he had so far only had one discussion, and that was with Ministerialdirektor Wohlthat, whom he also hoped to see again on the 15th. The length of his stay in Berlin would depend on the possibility of further discussions.

The following may be mentioned from among the many subjects broached during the conversation:

1) Drummond-Wolff emphasized that the political combinations into which Great Britain was now entering did not preclude Great Britain from leaving to Germany, throughout the world and particularly in Eastern Europe and the Balkans, such economic activities as she was rightfully entitled to. In fact Britain would even support these activities. He asked what would be my view if Great Britain were to abandon her hitherto strict standpoint on the most-favoured-nation question, and that in two ways:

a) Firstly, Great Britain could forgo tariff preferences which Germany might negotiate in agreements with third countries—here he apparently had the Balkan countries in mind—and

b) Great Britain could, contrary to the standpoint she has so far adopted (in my view this has so far been only a theoretical standpoint), renounce her claim that in her relations with Germany the right to most-favoured-nation treatment should apply not only to tariffs but also to quotas.

We discussed these questions only in general terms. Drummond-Wolff returned to them repeatedly with, I felt, very theoretical arguments, such as: Internationally the right of most-favoured-nation treatment must form the basis of economic relations, but in the particular national interest exceptions must be admitted. Internationally-minded Jewry was the greatest opponent of any relaxation of the right to most-favoured-nation treatment, etc.

2) Drummond-Wolff put the direct question as to what amount would be necessary for a loan to help Germany resolve her existing foreign exchange difficulties.

In the conversation on this subject, I drew attention to the declarations, repeatedly made, that Germany did not want to incur a new foreign debt, and regarding the amount I spoke roughly as follows:

a) Since our productive capacity was rising higher and higher, and given the tasks before us, the amount of foreign exchange we need for raw materials and food has really no upper limit.

b) Any loan, however, finds its limit easily calculated by the lender: this consists in the amount of additional foreign exchange

which the lender allows us to earn by exports in order to enable us to pay therefrom interest and amortization on the loan.

3) Drummond-Wolff asked what we would think of a resumption of the Anglo-German economic negotiations,⁷⁵ broken off in March, but was not quite *au courant* with the circumstances of the discussions running concurrently, namely:

a) the discussions between the industrial associations on cartel and price matters, and

b) the official Government discussions on the increase in German exports to Great Britain and—this is important!—to the British colonies to be achieved by tariff reductions and Government contracts.

He was aware that the British industrialists had recently informed their German colleagues that the discussions were to be continued in London in June.

As to the Government negotiations I gave it as my opinion that in accordance with the British promise they must be continued as soon as the industrialists' discussions had shown tangible results (as had already been achieved in many branches of industry).

4) Drummond-Wolff did not know that Anglo-German preliminary discussions for the regulation of payments between the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia and Great Britain were to begin in London on May 18. He was very interested to hear this.

5) Actually the only political question which Drummond-Wolff asked was when we would make a claim for the return of the colonies and which colonies it would include.

I gave the usual answer, that we claim all colonies which belong to us; that we shall raise the claim in due course; and that it will be a matter for negotiation which colonial territories we receive.

Rüter

From *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945*, Series D, Vol. VI, pp. 491-493.

No. 294. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in France to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the USSR

May 15, 1939

I communicated to Bonnet the text of our reply* to the English proposal.** His first reaction was to ask me whether the proposal

* See Document No. 291.

** See Documents Nos. 278, 279.

which he himself had made had also been "examined in Moscow." * When I told him in reply that Seeds had stated in handing over the English counter-proposal that the French Government did not object to it, in connection with which the impression could be formed that the French Government had associated itself with the English proposal, Bonnet made the following clarification. For a long time he had been persuading the English to associate themselves with his draft of a three-power agreement, but the English had been adamant and on their own behalf they had put forward a new draft to which he, Bonnet, had indeed not objected. But neither had he "withdrawn his own proposal". In any event, he was prepared at any moment to sign such a bilateral agreement with the USSR.

As regards the three conditions we had advanced in our latest reply to the English, he "personally" had no objections either to the first or to the third one. France, which was already linked with the USSR through a mutual assistance pact,⁷ could not but welcome England's joining it. The third condition had been included in all the drafts he himself had proposed, as he fully shared our view that without a "concrete" agreement mutual assistance pacts were ineffective. He was only "bothered" by the second condition: the extension of a guarantee to the Baltic countries. But in any event, he would refrain from making a final evaluation for the present. He wanted to talk the matter over with Daladier and also to "get London's reaction".

Ambassador

From the archives.

No. 295. Memorandum of a Conversation Between an Official of the Danzig Senate and the President of the Senate

May 15, 1939

On May 5, 1939, I spoke with President Greiser who related the following.

In the next several weeks the storm that has been brewing in the relations between Germany and Poland will not yet have broken. German action against Poland is to be expected in August at the earliest. In the coming weeks Germany will try to drive a wedge into relationships between Poland and England. For this purpose the Danzig issue is an excellent instrument. We must bring forth

* See Document No. 262.

the Danzig problem in such a way as to create the impression in London that Danzig is the crux of the German-Polish conflict. If the English recognize the proposition that Danzig is German by nature, and if they support a separate solution of the Danzig problem and thereby the incorporation of Danzig into Germany, it will mean that we will have practically won the game. It will then become possible to implement the remaining German claims against Poland as well. I am convinced that regardless of all statements to the contrary,¹¹⁵ the English Government is not prepared to put the Anglo-Polish mutual assistance pact into effect over the Danzig question. And if the English start hesitating on this score, the entire Polish system of security will collapse, and Poland will be ready to capitulate.

I believe that Hitler will pursue the conflict with Poland to the very end, even if peaceful methods should fail and the only alternative would be military intervention. In any event, Hitler will choose a time for such a military clash when Germany's external political situation will be favourable. Just now this is not the case. For this reason alone I believe that a Polish-German conflict is impossible at the present time. It is hard to foretell the direction in which the international situation will develop. For us the position of the Soviet Union is of decisive significance. According to my information, there has only been slight and limited contact between Germany and Russia through the Russian Ambassador in Berlin. The occasion for this was the contract for deliveries of "Skoda" products which the Soviet Union had long since concluded with Czechoslovakia. Through its Ambassador in Berlin Moscow had enquired whether the contract would remain in force after the formation of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. Some time afterwards the German side made it known that the "Skoda" contract would be fulfilled by Germany even in the changed conditions.

From the archives.

**No. 296. Telegram from the German Foreign Minister to the
Ambassador of Germany in Japan**

May 15, 1939

In agreement with the Italian Government, I have during the last few days given Ambassador Oshima the following information about the German and Italian views:

1) The German and Italian Governments are willing to continue to follow without change the political line so far taken by them towards Japan.

2) The two Governments have decided to sign a bilateral pact of alliance¹¹⁴ in the course of the present month, because they consider it opportune to meet with a swift counter move the political activity embarked on for purposes of propaganda by the Western Powers.

3) The trilateral Berlin-Rome-Tokyo negotiations are in no way prejudiced by the prior Italo-German pact of alliance. This pact of alliance will provide final proof of the unshakeable solidarity of the Rome-Berlin Axis³⁴ from the juristic standpoint as well. If they desire a Three Power pact⁵³, the Japanese cannot but be glad to see the internal relationship between their two European partners clarified beyond a shadow of doubt and every possibility of internal divergences between these partners ruled out.

4) It is, moreover, not the fault of the German and Italian Governments that the conclusion of a Three Power pact is being so much delayed. For a long time I have been pointing out to the Japanese that, if the conclusion of a Three Power pact were postponed any longer, it might become necessary to conclude an Italo-German pact beforehand.

5) The fact that the Italo-German pact will in certain respects provide for closer ties than the present draft of the Three Power pact constitutes nothing to disturb the Japanese either. It is after all quite natural that political and military co-operation between the two European countries, who are neighbours and find themselves directly confronted by France and Britain, should be on more intimate lines than co-operation with far distant Japan. If, therefore, there emerges a difference between the two pacts, Germany and Italy are in no way thereby putting Japan politically on a lower level of friendship. World opinion, where the Rome-Berlin Axis has for long been a firmly established idea, will regard such a difference as a matter of course. Furthermore, it has always been Japan who has constantly pressed for cautious wording of the obligations in the Three Power Pact. Germany and Italy for their part could not but welcome it if Japan were willing to join in the closer ties of the Italo-German pact. Japan cannot, however, demand, nor has she any interest in so doing, that Germany and Italy should in their mutual relations adapt themselves to the scale desired by Japan for the Three Power pact.

6) The existence side by side of the Italo-German pact and the Three Power pact will not involve any difficulties, either practically or technically. The several provisions of the present Japanese draft Three Power pact can remain completely unchanged. All that is required is the insertion at the end of a purely formal article, clarifying in legal terms the relationship of the two pacts to each other. I have handed Oshima the draft of an article to this effect.

7) The German and Italian Governments are extremely anxious that the Japanese Government should now reach their final decision quickly, so that the Three Power pact can be secretly initialled at the same time as the Italo-German pact is signed. This desire reveals once more that there is no intention on their part* of disparaging, from the political aspect, their relations with Japan.

Please make use of the above arguments in conversation with your confidant and, if possible, with the War Minister direct, and thus press for a speedy positive decision by the Japanese Government. In so doing please intimate, as seems appropriate, the following:

Although the German and Italian Governments, as already emphasized above, are firmly resolved to abide by their previous policy towards Japan, yet it cannot pass unmentioned that the whole attitude of the Japanese Government up to now is gradually beginning to engender a certain scepticism in Rome and Berlin. Mussolini recently expressed concern as to whether the way in which Tokyo had so far dealt with the matter should not, after all, be interpreted as indicating that, in the end, the Japanese Government would not have the strength to make a positive decision. Moreover, the Führer has recently told me repeatedly that the Japanese attitude was becoming more and more incomprehensible to him. Japan must surely realize that, from her own point of view, her major political interests coincided with those of Germany and Italy and that her place was therefore at the side of these two Powers.

Further, please make it clear to your Japanese interlocutor that Japan's fear that America will join Britain and France in the event of war is certainly no argument against concluding a Three Power pact, since this pact will be the best means of keeping America out of war. On the other hand Japan must fully realize that the safeguarding of her position in East Asia, and especially in China, depends primarily on the superiority of the Axis Powers over the Western Powers. If this superiority did not exist, Japan would very quickly feel the consequences. It is therefore indubitably in Japan's interests to reinforce this superiority by her accession, and not to convey the possible impression to the Western Powers that they could count on Japan's neutrality in a conflict with Germany and Italy.

The text of the draft pact and of the relevant documents will be telegraphed separately to Tokyo for your personal information.

Ribbentrop

From *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945*, Series D, Vol. VI, pp. 494-496.

* The German and Italian Governments.

No. 297. Telegram from the Soviet Chargé d'Affaires in the USA to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the USSR

May 16, 1939

Today I called on Hull at his invitation. He congratulated me on my appointment* and said many friendly words of a general nature.

I took the opportunity to give him a correct account of our talks with England. Hull said that although owing to tradition and to the isolationist opposition the American Government had been deprived of an opportunity to participate in projects of mutual assistance against aggressors outside the Western Hemisphere, it was nonetheless interested in the success of the talks. He understood our demand for reciprocity and equal obligations. He saw his own task at present in explaining to Congress and to the American people that this was not a question of local conflicts but one of preparations for recarving the map of the world which ultimately would be harmful to the interests of the USA.

He enquired as to when I intended to present my Letters of Credence to the President who was leaving on an extended tour of the country around June 10. I replied that I would keep that in mind. Hull said that after I had presented my credentials he would like to discuss some practical questions concerning our relations. He commented warmly on our pavilion at the New York Fair.

Chargé d'Affaires

From the archives.

No. 298. Letter from the Ambassador of Poland in Britain to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Poland

May 19, 1939

As Colonel Kwiecynski is flying to Warsaw tomorrow morning I hasten to set down here in a few words my impressions and observations concerning the Anglo-Soviet negotiations. I shall not go into a detailed analysis of the present state of the negotiations since

* A reference to the appointment of K. A. Umansky as Ambassador of the USSR to the USA.

I assume that you, M. Minister, are receiving from Kennard continuous and more detailed information than the information I possess. Furthermore, in this matter everything is in a state of flux and constant change. Nonetheless, I wish to draw your attention to the sentiments and opinions that are becoming ever more obvious in the light of these negotiations.

In my telegram of the 17th of this month I described in brief the views of the group of "activists" which includes Churchill and his followers in the Conservative Party and the entire camp of independent Liberals headed by Archibald Sinclair and Lloyd George. On the Russian question this group is obviously supported by the Labour Party. I wrote that these circles were pressing for an Anglo-Franco-Soviet alliance and that they were accusing the Government of not being resolute and vigorous enough on the question of creating a political organization possessing the maximum strength and practical possibilities and capable of erecting a barrier against German expansion. In their opinion Lord Halifax and Premier Chamberlain—the former most likely out of ideological considerations and the latter so as not to close off completely the avenues leading to the policy of "appeasement"—are consciously and deliberately dragging out the negotiations with Moscow to which their attitude remains cool as before. I also mentioned that the persons with whom I had had conversations, who were displeased with the Premier's method, that is, with his tactical line towards the Soviets, which takes into account Polish demands, were doing their best to deprive the Premier of that argument. The clarifications which I gave on your instructions, M. Minister, have enabled me to prevent Poland's name from being used in the domestic political game played by the English.*

It is hard to determine very accurately what are the concrete plans of the Premier and the Government for the immediate future and how well-founded are the suspicions of the group of "activists". It is beyond all doubt, however, that to some extent these suspicions are justified and that the Premier never ceases to think about easing

* Incidentally, this is how Churchill explained to me his efforts to draw Russia over as close as possible to the side of the "coalition" in the event of war.

There was no doubt that the Polish Army would fight the Germans with courage and, in the first phase, probably successfully. However, its armaments and supplies could stand no comparison with the armaments and the powerful supplies of the German Army; thus after only a few months a dangerous crisis would arise for us. There could be successful opposition to this only if it were possible to use Soviet resources and their war industry and transit through their territory. Apart from the backward state of Russian railways, a special difficulty here would be the difference in gauges which would necessitate the transfer of supplies at the frontier. But for this transfer it would be necessary to have suitable goods trucks, sufficiently long railway branch lines and so forth. The construction on a large scale of these installations would have to be carried out on the border within the shortest possible time (*Raczynski's note*).

tensions, avoiding, for that reason, all that might deprive him of an opportunity to revert once again to negotiations with Berlin and, possibly, with Rome.

The "activists" are inclined to argue that for the aforesaid reasons the Premier is not anxious to speed up implementation of military and financial co-operation between England and her new allies. This reproach is perhaps merited in so far as the Chamberlain Government continues to resist putting the economy entirely on a war footing whereby no account would be taken of the "normal" requirements of a peacetime economy whether in the field of finance or in the field of manpower resources.

I am appending to this dispatch the memorandum of a conversation I had with Colonel Ismay, the Secretary of the Imperial Defence Committee. In my opinion, it would be wrong to overestimate the significance of some of Colonel Ismay's characteristic statements, which undoubtedly largely reflect his personal views. On the other hand, the Colonel's important post and the contacts he has, owing to his position, with the Premier and his closest associates, do not warrant our discounting his opinion. A consideration of the state of affairs in this matter leads to the conclusion that it is necessary to increase our vigilance and our unceasing pressure so as, on the one hand, to compel our English partner to take positive action and, on the other, to stop the display of defeatism and compliance, which might be exploited in the interests of others.*

I am dictating this report after attending a meeting of the House of Commons where I listened to a debate devoted mainly to the Anglo-Soviet talks. I am not yet in possession of all the materials and therefore I am unable to give an assessment of the results of that debate and particularly of the well-known statement by the Premier. In some ways the statement is another in a series of I do not know how many proposals calling on Germany to come to terms. At the same time the statement also reflects his age-old negative attitude to the conclusion of a formal alliance with the Soviets. I would not be at all surprised if Premier Chamberlain regarded his statement as a warning and had made the question of having closer relationships with Moscow contingent on Germany's reaction to his statement.

Edward Raczynski

Ambassador of the Polish Republic

From the archives.

* I have in mind the letters on the subject of Anglo-German relations which have been appearing every now and then in *The Times* and which were initiated by the "defeatist" letter signed by Lord Rushcliff. I shall devote a separate report to this all too undesirable activity of *The Times* and to the measures I have taken to end it (*Raczynski's note*).

No. 299. Memorandum of a Conversation Between the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR and the Ambassador of Japan in the USSR *

May 19, 1939

I called in the Ambassador and told him the following. We have received information about the violation of the border of the Mongolian People's Republic by Japano-Manchurian forces. As there is a Pact of Mutual Assistance between the USSR and the MPR, I am obliged to make a statement to the Ambassador about the aforesaid violation of the border of the MPR. Of late, on May 11-12 and thereafter, there have been several violations of the MPR border by Japano-Manchurian units which have attacked Mongolian units in the area of Nomon-Kan-Burd-Obo and in the area of Don-gur-Obo. There were casualties among the military units of the MPR. Japano-Manchurian aircraft have also participated in this intrusion into the MPR. Thus, there have been gross violations of the border of the MPR, together with other inadmissible actions by Japano-Manchurian units. I am obliged to give warning that there is a limit to one's patience, and I am requesting the Ambassador to tell the Japanese Government that this should not happen again. This will be in the best interests of the Japanese Government itself. [. .]

From the archives.

No. 300. Letter from the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to the British Ambassador in Germany

May 19, 1939

During the course of a conversation with the German Ambassador yesterday, Herr von Dirksen referred to the question of the press. On both sides much harm was being done by press attacks. Could we not have a press truce? If we did agree to do so, the German Government could, of course, implement it 100 per cent, and we might implement it perhaps 75 per cent, if I were able to exercise influence upon newspaper owners. I told the Ambassador that I should always be willing to consider this, but that the problem would largely solve itself if the German Government could take ac-

* Abridged.

tion and pursue a policy that would allow things to become more normal. I was, however, quite ready to try to go further, and, if the Ambassador could feel himself authorised to write me a letter saying that, if our press were able to moderate its tone, he could guarantee the German press would do the same, I would see whether I could do anything with the owners of the principal newspapers. The Ambassador promised to explore this suggestion.

Halifax

From Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939, Third Series, Vol. V, London, 1952, p. 603.

No. 301. Telegram from the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR to the Representative of the USSR at the Session of the Council of the League of Nations *

May 20, 1939

On the question of Japanese aggression against China be guided by the following: the proposal of the Chinese¹¹⁶ should be accepted as a basis, so that amendments may then be introduced. Say that it is the policy of the Soviet Government to support victims of aggression. Point out also that in keeping with Chamberlain's latest statement about consent to support victims of aggression the English should also support the Chinese proposal.

People's Commissar

From the archives.

No. 302. Telegram from the German Ambassador in Japan to the German Foreign Minister

May 20, 1939

The War Minister** has just had a written statement for the Reich Foreign Minister read out to me by General Majiri. The following is a brief summary of its contents:

The Conference of Five Ministers had today arrived at a Japanese decision on the Military Pact.⁵³ The Foreign Minister would

* I. M. Maisky.

** S. Itagaki.

inform the German Government on Sunday at the latest. The Army had secured agreement within the Services, had achieved acceptance of the demands in principle, and conceded some changes in wording. The Japanese Government hoped that agreement with Germany and Italy might be rapidly reached, as far as possible on this basis. The Army was striving for secret initialling, simultaneous with the signature of the Italo-German Pact,¹¹⁴ in order to establish the three-Power character of the alliance from the outset. Motivated by this the War Minister repeatedly expressed the urgent request that the Reich Foreign Minister might, with complete confidence in the sincerity of the Army and its ability to carry the field, overlook minor amendments to the German draft.

This impressive declaration emphasizes the firm resolve of the Army to make the alliance, like the earlier Anti-Comintern Pact, fully effective at home and abroad despite initial difficulties. Japanese history was said to show that Japan's approach to the conclusion of treaties was particularly cautious and hesitating but that, once treaties had been concluded, she abided by them very faithfully. In such a short time the Army had not been able to uproot completely the feelings of friendship for Britain fostered for many years, but, as the real driving force behind Japanese State policy, accepted full responsibility for the alliance idea gradually permeating all sections of the population.

From numerous indications I have gained the impression that today's Cabinet decision is final. The War Minister's statement bore the stamp of the most straightforward sincerity and was read out with solemn gravity.

Ott

From *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945*, Series D, Vol. VI, pp. 541-542.

No. 303. Telegram from the Representative of the USSR at the Session of the League of Nations Council to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the USSR

Geneva, May 21, 1939

On Halifax's initiative I had a conversation with him today which was mainly devoted to an exchange of views on questions relating to the Anglo-Soviet talks.

Halifax asked about the reasons for our refusal to accept the latest English proposal.* I stated the reasons, pointing out, how-

* See Document No. 279.

ever, that I was expressing my personal opinion. I particularly emphasized the absence in the English proposal of genuine reciprocity and also pointed out that our objective was to prevent aggression and war and that this was possible only if there was such a concentration of powerful forces on the side of peace as would crush any hope of victory for the aggressor. This last argument made a big impression on Halifax. He asked me several times whether we would be satisfied with the extension of the Anglo-French guarantee to the Baltic States without a tripartite pact as stipulated in our proposal. I made it clear to him that our proposal was a minimum.

In my turn, I asked Halifax what were the objections of the British Government to our plan.* He was unable to give me any intelligible reply, and merely enlarged on Chamberlain's statement made in Parliament on May 19. As the biggest obstacle Halifax pointed to the alleged reluctance of the Baltic States themselves to be guaranteed by other Powers.

Judging by Halifax's arguments, it was perfectly obvious that the English Government was avoiding a tripartite pact purely out of a desire not to burn its bridges to Hitler and Mussolini.¹¹⁷

Halifax was interested in knowing whether the USSR would agree to guarantee Holland, Belgium and Switzerland in the event of our plan being accepted by the Western Powers. I replied that I could say nothing definite on this score at the moment but felt that if the Western Powers wished to raise that question the Soviet Government would probably not refuse to consider it.

In conclusion, Halifax said he would think over the matter once again and report his conclusions to the Cabinet on May 24 (Halifax is leaving Geneva in the evening of May 23), when the British Government would be taking a final decision. Halifax told me nothing about yesterday's Anglo-French talks in Paris.

Maisky

From the archives.

No. 304. Telegram from the Representative of the USSR at the Session of the League of Nations Council to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the USSR

May 22, 1939

Munters, the Latvian Minister for Foreign Affairs, whom I saw today at a luncheon given by Avenol,** asked me about the state of the Anglo-Soviet talks and in so doing he intimated that it would

* See Document No. 291.

** Secretary-General of the League of Nations.

be difficult for the Latvian Government to agree to a tripartite pact giving Latvia guarantees against aggression but that the question of such a pact guaranteeing her neutrality could be discussed.

Maisky

From the archives.

No. 305. Statement by the Representative of the USSR at the Session of the League of Nations Council

May 22, 1939

In my capacity as representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, I would like to support the proposals put forward by the Chinese representative in his most able and eloquent speech.¹¹⁶ It is now being more and more universally recognised, even by those who were previously sceptical, that the only way to put an end to the further development of lawlessness and chaos in international relations—which, in the end, must inevitably lead to a general war spreading all over Europe and possibly all over the whole world—is by a firm resistance to aggression. From this it follows naturally that every victim of aggression should be rendered the maximum assistance and support it is possible to give.

This is the attitude of my country, which is, as a matter of policy, always prepared to render assistance to the victims of aggression. This is also the growing conviction of other Governments. In this connection, I wish to quote the fact that the Government of the United Kingdom, through, I believe, no less a person than the British Prime Minister, has registered its adherence to the principle of giving help and assistance to the victims of aggression who are putting up an active resistance for their independence.¹¹⁸ This principle is fully applicable in the case of China, which we are discussing today. China is the victim of brutal and unprovoked aggression, and she is fighting hard and heroically for her independence. I believe, therefore, that the Council should record its appreciation of the Chinese delegation's request, and that the Chinese proposals should be given the maximum sympathetic consideration, especially by those Powers which support the said principle.

From the archives.
Published in *League of Nations.
Official Journal*, May-June 1939,
pp. 255-256.

No. 306. Minutes of a Conference at the German Reich
Chancellor's*

May 23, 1939

Present: The Führer, Field Marshal Göring, Grand Admiral Raeder, Colonel General von Brauchitsch, Colonel General Keitel, Colonel General Milch, General (of Artillery) Halder, General Bodenschatz, Rear-Admiral Schniewind, Colonel Jeschonnek, Colonel (General Staff) Warlimont, Lieutenant Colonel (General Staff) Schmudt, Captain Engel, Lieutenant Commander Albrecht, Captain von Below.

Subject: Briefing on the Situation and Political Objectives

The Führer gave as the purpose of the conference:

- (1) Review of the situation.
- (2) To set the Armed Forces the tasks arising from the situation.
- (3) Definition of the conclusions to be drawn from these tasks.
- (4) Ensuring that secrecy is maintained on all decisions and measures resulting from these conclusions. Secrecy is the prerequisite for success.

The gist of the Führer's statements is as follows.

Our present position must be viewed under two aspects.

- (a) Actual development from 1933-1939.
- (b) Germany's never-changing situation.

From 1933-1939 progress in all spheres. Our military situation improved enormously.

Our situation *vis-à-vis* the surrounding world has remained the same.

Germany was outside the circle of the Great Powers. A balance of power had been established without Germany's participation.

This balance is being disturbed by Germany claiming her vital rights and her reappearance in the circle of the Great Powers. All claims are regarded as "breaking in".

The English are more afraid of economic dangers than of ordinary threats of force.

The ideological problems have been solved by the mass of 80,000,000 people. The economic problems must also be solved. To create the economic conditions necessary for this is a task no German can disregard. The solution of the problems demands courage. The principle must not prevail that one can accommodate oneself to the circumstances and thus shirk the solution of the problems. The circumstances must rather be adapted to suit the demands. This is not possible without "breaking in" to other countries or attacking other people's possessions.

Living space proportionate to the greatness of the State is fundamental to every Power. One can do without it for a time but

* Abridged.

sooner or later the problems will have to be solved by hook or by crook. The alternatives are rise or decline. In fifteen or twenty years' time the solution will be forced upon us. No German statesman can shirk the problem for longer.

At present we are in a state of national ebullience as are two other states: Italy and Japan.

The years behind us have been put to good use. All measures were consistently directed towards the goal.

After six years the present position is as follows:

The national political unification of the Germans has been achieved bar minor exceptions. Further successes can no longer be won without bloodshed.

The delineation of frontiers is of military importance.

The Pole is not a fresh enemy. Poland will always be on the side of our adversaries. In spite of treaties of friendship Poland has always been bent on exploiting every opportunity against us.

It is not Danzig that is at stake. For us it is a matter of expanding our living space in the East and making food supplies secure and also solving the problem of the Baltic States. Food supplies can only be obtained from thinly populated areas. Over and above fertility, the thorough German cultivation will tremendously increase the produce.

No other openings can be seen in Europe.

Colonies: A warning against gifts of colonial possessions. This is no solution of the food problem. Blockade!

If fate forces us into a showdown with the West it is good to possess a largish area in the East. In war time we shall be even less able to rely on record harvests than in peace time.

The populations of non-German territories do not render military service and are available for labour service.

The problem "Poland" cannot be dissociated from the showdown with the West. Poland's internal solidarity against Bolshevism is doubtful. Therefore Poland is also a doubtful barrier against Russia.

Success in war in the West with a rapid decision is questionable and so is Poland's attitude.

The Polish régime will not stand up to Russian pressure. Poland sees danger in a German victory over the West and will try to deprive us of victory.

There is therefore no question of sparing Poland and we are left with the decision:

To attack Poland at the first suitable opportunity.

We cannot expect a repetition of Czechia. There will be war. Our task is to isolate Poland. Success in isolating her will be decisive.

Therefore the Führer must reserve to himself the final order to strike. It must not come to a simultaneous showdown with the West (France and England).

If it is not definitely certain that a German-Polish conflict will

not lead to war with the West then the fight must be primarily against England and France.

Thesis: Conflict with Poland—beginning with an attack on Poland—will only be successful if the West keeps out of the ring.

If that is not possible it is better to fall upon the West and finish off Poland at the same time. [. .]

Schmundt, Lt. Col.

Certified correct.

From *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945*, Series D, Vol. VI, pp. 574-580.

No. 307. Communiqué of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the USSR

May 24, 1939

The Government of Finland has approached the Government of the USSR with a request for assistance in carrying out a revision of the Convention of 1921 under which fortifications are not to be erected on the Aaland Islands and the islands are to be neutralized. The Convention was signed by 22 states. Although the USSR is not a signatory of the Convention, the Soviet Government has nonetheless considered it to be a matter of special significance. Finland is now seeking to revise the Convention of 1921, desiring, jointly with Sweden, to carry out the fortification of the Aaland Islands. In view of this the Soviet Government has requested, through the Finnish Minister in Moscow, for information on the character and extent of the contemplated fortification of the Aaland Islands. For the USSR this question is all the more significant since the fortification of the Aaland Islands, situated not far from the entrance to the Gulf of Finland, may be used in war time to block the entrances to and exits from the Gulf of Finland for Soviet ships.

Since the purpose of the fortification of the Aaland Islands remains undefined, and while the Finnish Government has refused to provide information on the extent and character of the fortifications, the Soviet Government, believing that under these conditions it is deprived of an opportunity to possess materials essential for arriving at a solution of the said question, has given instructions to its representative in the League of Nations to seek a postponement of the consideration of this question at this time in the League of Nations Council.¹¹⁹

From *Izvestia*, No. 119 (6889),
May 24, 1939.

No. 308. Memorandum of a Conversation Between a German Businessman and the Counsellor of the German Embassy in Poland

May 25, 1939

Von Scheliah related that at the suggestion of the Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Poland, Arciszewski, German Ambassador von Moltke and Arciszewski himself attended a luncheon given by the Bulgarian Minister in Warsaw on May 19 or 20. Arciszewski acted with Beck's approval. Arciszewski said that Beck was participating with great reluctance in the conduct of Poland's present policy and he was, of course, prepared to come to terms with Germany if it should prove possible to find a way to do so that would not look like capitulation. Beck believes that a war between Germany and Poland would be an absurdity from which no one but third parties would stand to gain. The great importance that Beck attaches to the policy of doing nothing to irritate Germany is illustrated by the restraint Poland is displaying in respect of the talks about a pact between the West and the Soviet Union. Beck also fails to understand why Germany wants to have Danzig while refusing to take other German territories situated on the borders of Germany, such as the Southern Tyrol and Alsace.

In answering Arciszewski's question as to why Germany had chosen such an unfavourable moment to address her proposal to Poland, Moltke said that the proposal was to have served the cause of appeasement and that therefore, from the German point of view, the timing could not be of decisive significance. Moltke went on to state that at present there were no favourable opportunities for beginning a discussion. One of the reasons for this was Beck's speech, which displayed little desire to meet the other side.

On the basis of conversations which he had had between the 15th and 19th of May in Berlin with Woermann, head of the Political Department of the Foreign Ministry, and several other high-ranking officials of the Ministry, as well as with a number of staff officers from the Air Ministry and the War Ministry, von Scheliah concluded that just now no one in Berlin actually wanted to enter into negotiations with Poland under whatever circumstances. Should the Polish side make any concrete proposals this would be regarded in Berlin as most inopportune. They are counting on the complete success of the wearing-down tactics presently being applied against Poland. Such an approach is further encouraged, firstly, by reports about Poland's mounting economic difficulties and, secondly, by the above-mentioned reports of Polish willingness to negotiate. For this reason the aforementioned Berlin circles are openly saying that a

settlement of the German-Polish dispute is now possible only on the basis of the return to Germany of Danzig and the Corridor. One can sometimes hear—and from very well-informed sources—that the German demands are already being extended to Poznan and Upper Silesia.

The Soviet Union is a factor which serves to restrain Germany in its undoubted aggressive designs in respect of Poland. In the opinion of influential Berlin circles, at present the position of the Soviet Union is in general the most important question.

In touching upon his other observations, von Scheliah said that the Reich Air Ministry was absolutely convinced that Germany would soon be at war. Opinions differ as to dates and concepts. They are saying that we do not want a world war, but that the Führer will certainly manage to find some suitable conjuncture. High-ranking officers in the War Ministry are just as belligerent. They are of the opinion that the best thing would be the timely elimination of the eastern front by way of a preventive war against Poland. In saying so, they are referring to pronouncements by Hitler who is at present "personally angry with Poland". Hitler's recent speech before young Wehrmacht officers encouraged the spread of belligerent sentiments in both of the above-mentioned ministries. In that speech he also proceeded from the idea that an early war was inevitable and urged the officers to be prepared even today to give up their lives in that historic action.

Throughout the whole of Eastern Germany there are large-scale troop movements in the direction of the eastern frontier. These troop movements have caused great concern among the population in the frontier areas. Already there have been numerous cases of migration to interior areas of the country. In Berlin, on the contrary, except for high-ranking officials and officers, the mood is completely fatalistic. People are preoccupied with the question of how to get their daily bread.

Contrary to the prevailing opinion in Poland that Ribbentrop is to blame for the stiffening of the German foreign policy line, it should be noted that Ribbentrop's foreign policy is determined entirely by Hitler. Owing to his rudeness, arrogance and lack of intuition in conversations with foreign ambassadors and ministers Ribbentrop can only make still less palatable the already barely acceptable desires and demands of Germany. This, for example, is what he actually did in his conversations with Lipski in March-April of this year.¹⁰⁸ Because of this formal impression many foreign diplomats regard him as the author of the toughened German foreign policy.

No. 309. Telegram from the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR to the Soviet Ambassador in France

May 26, 1939

It has come to our knowledge that both the English and the French want to tie in their acceptance of our demand for mutual assistance between the three Powers with the Covenant of the League of Nations and with the League of Nations procedure. In other words, the English and the French, after having at a meeting of the League of Nations in the presence of Litvinov, recognized as unbinding the most important points of the League Covenant, including Article 16, now want to turn the first point of our proposal* into a mere scrap of paper. This means that in the event of aggression mutual assistance will not be rendered immediately, as we are proposing, but only after deliberations in the League of Nations, with no one knowing what the results of such deliberations would be.

Warn the French on your behalf that you are deeply convinced that Moscow will not accept the reservation in respect of the League of Nations but will insist on the immediate entry into force of a pact of mutual assistance.

People's Commissar

From the archives.

No. 310. From the Diary of the Italian Foreign Minister

May 26, 1939

[...] We** agreed and embodied in a memorandum the following points: (1) Italy will finance Matchek's*** Croat revolt with twenty million dinars; (2) he undertakes to prepare the revolution within four to six months; (3) he will quickly call in the Italian troops to insure order and peace; (4) Croatia will proclaim itself an independent state in confederation with Rome. It will have its own government but its ministries for foreign affairs and of national defense will be in common with Italy; (5) Italy will be permitted

* See Document No. 291.

** Ciano and Carnelutti, a representative of the Croatia separatist movement.

*** Leader of the Croat Peasant Party.

to keep armed forces in Croatia and will also keep there a lieutenant general as in Albania; (6) after some time we shall decide on possibilities for union under a single head.

The Duce read the report and approved. He desires, however, that Matchek countersign it. In the meantime, I have sent it to Zagreb by safe means. In the coming week we shall begin our payments via Zurich.

Mussolini is taken up with the idea of breaking Yugoslavia to pieces and of annexing the kingdom of Croatia. He thinks the undertaking is sufficiently easy, and, as things stand, I agree with him. [. . .]

From *The Ciano Diaries, 1939-1943*, pp. 87-88.

No. 311. Memorandum of a Conversation Between the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR and the Ambassador of Britain and the Chargé d'Affaires of France in the USSR

May 27, 1939

Seeds said that he had been instructed to hand to the Soviet Government a new draft of an agreement between the USSR, England and France on joint resistance to aggression in Europe.* The draft had been elaborated by the English Foreign Office with the utmost care and with due regard for all the wishes stated in the latest reply of the Soviet Government** to the English proposal. The Ambassador expressed the hope that the Government of the USSR would appreciate the big step made by the Government of England towards meeting the wishes of the USSR and would itself move towards a quick conclusion of the talks, in which the British Government was extremely interested.

Payart said that on behalf of the French Government he was handing to Comrade Molotov a draft tripartite agreement between France, the USSR and England which was identical with the English draft. Payart said he shared Seeds' view concerning the draft and, like the English Ambassador, he expressed the hope that the Soviet Government would find the present Anglo-French proposal acceptable and that an early and happy conclusion of the talks on this matter between the three countries might be expected.

Replying to Seeds and Payart, Comrade Molotov said that, having familiarized himself with the Anglo-French draft, he had drawn

* See Document No. 312.

** See Document No. 291.

a negative conclusion about that document. The Anglo-French draft contained no plan for the organization of effective mutual assistance of the USSR, England and France against aggression in Europe; furthermore, it gave no indication that the English and French Governments were seriously interested in concluding a pact with the USSR. The Anglo-French proposal leaves the impression that the English and French Governments were interested less in a pact itself than in discussions about it. England and France might need these discussions for some reasons. The Soviet Government did not know what these reasons were. It was not interested in discussions about a pact, but in organizing the effective mutual assistance of the USSR, England and France against aggression in Europe. The Soviet Government did not intend to engage in discussions whose purposes it did not know. The English and French Governments could conduct such discussions with more suitable partners than the USSR. Perhaps both Governments, having concluded mutual assistance pacts with each other and with Poland and Turkey, felt that this was sufficient for them. That was perhaps why they were not interested in concluding an effective pact with the Soviet Union. This was the conclusion prompted by the Anglo-French draft, which did not contain proposals for the conclusion of an effective mutual assistance pact between the USSR, England and France and reduced this question wholly to discussions about a pact.¹²⁰

Passing to the individual points contained in the Anglo-French draft, Comrade Molotov made the following comment:

In the Anglo-French draft the mechanism for the rendering of mutual assistance by the three States is made subordinate to the complex and lengthy procedure established by the League of Nations. The Soviet Government is not against the League of Nations. On the contrary, at the September session of the Assembly the representative of the USSR vigorously came out in defence of the League, notably of Article 16 of its Covenant, against other delegates, including the English delegate, who finally spoke in favour of regarding this article as non-mandatory for the members of the League of Nations. However, the procedure provided for in the League of Nations Covenant for carrying out mutual assistance against aggression, which is now being proposed for adoption in the Anglo-French draft, cannot but be regarded as inadequate in meeting the needs of effective mutual assistance. Article 16 of the League of Nations Covenant requires a recommendation by the Council of the League before such mutual assistance is rendered. The situation might arise in which the question of aggression against the USSR by a member of the Axis would be placed before the Council. The representative of some country, say Bolivia, would start debating in the Council whether or not there had actually been an act of aggression against the USSR, and whether or not it was necessary to render assistance to the USSR. In the meantime the aggressor would be pouring artillery fire onto Soviet territory.

The Soviet Government could not accept the replacement of effective assistance to the victim of aggression by mere discussions of the question. Incidentally, in the Treaties of Mutual Assistance concluded between England and France, and also by both those States with Poland and by the English Government with the Turkish Government there is no obligation to make such assistance subordinate to the League of Nations procedure as laid down in Article 16 of the League Covenant. Why then should such subordination be envisaged in the Anglo-French draft of a treaty with the USSR? Equally puzzling is paragraph 5 of the Anglo-French draft which states that the rendering of support and assistance by the Soviet Union, England and France in cases referred to in paragraphs 1 and 2 of the draft should be without prejudice "to the rights and positions of other Powers". How could one act against an aggressor without prejudice to him? And finally, paragraph 4 suggests that in the event of a threat of aggression the three contracting States would not act but would merely consult together. This also shows that the Anglo-French proposal prefers mere discussions of the subject to effective counter-measures against the aggressor. Comrade Molotov again states that the position of the Soviet Government is quite the opposite. The USSR desires agreement on effective defence against an aggressor. It is not interested in, nor is it satisfied with, mere discussion. If the Governments of France and England are interested in having such discussions, they may conduct them with other partners. Comrade Molotov notes that for the moment he is expressing his personal opinion. He will submit the Anglo-French draft for consideration by the Government. After this he will be able to give a conclusive reply concerning this document.

With a look of extreme amazement Seeds and Payart tried to argue that the evaluation of the Anglo-French document given by Comrade Molotov was based on an obvious misapprehension. It was true that the Anglo-French proposal mentioned the League of Nations and even Article 16 of its Covenant. But this had been done merely in order to satisfy public opinion, particularly in England, where it was customary to link every international action with the League of Nations. Both Seeds and Payart said that their Governments in no way meant to make the mechanism of mutual assistance by the USSR, France and England subordinate to the League of Nations procedure. Both Governments recognized the need for the prompt and automatic mutual assistance of the three contracting States against aggression. Both Seeds and Payart were stating this quite officially. The Anglo-French draft merely provided for the tripartite agreement between England, the Soviet Union and France to be concluded "according to the principles and in the spirit of the League of Nations." Nothing in this formula should be unacceptable to the USSR. Both Seeds and Payart gave assurances that it in no way imposed restraints on the automatic rendering of mutual assistance, in which the English and French Governments

were just as interested as the USSR. Seeds and Payart also regarded as a misunderstanding the interpretation according to which the obligation, mentioned in paragraph 5 of the Anglo-French draft, to prevent "prejudice to the rights and position of other Powers" meant protecting the aggressor. The aforesaid paragraph was aimed solely at safeguarding the sovereign rights of the weakest States to which England, France and the USSR were agreeing to render assistance. It could happen that in the interests of defending such a State against aggression one of the three contracting Governments might consider it necessary, for instance, to destroy a town situated on the territory of the State being defended. Should the Government of the latter protest, its sovereignty in this matter would obviously have to be taken into account. Both Seeds and Payart expressed surprise over the assumption that the Governments of England and France were not seriously interested in a pact with the USSR and preferred mere discussions on the matter to concrete decisions. Seeds felt that his Government had taken a resolute step towards meeting the position of the Soviet Government and that the treaty with the USSR which it was proposing marked a radical turning point in English foreign policy. Both Governments were interested in the earliest possible completion of the negotiations with the USSR. Both wanted to act, not procrastinate. It was necessary, without losing time, to remove the misapprehensions that had arisen in Comrade Molotov's mind during his first reading of the Anglo-French document. Seeds would immediately inform his Government of the misapprehensions and suggest that they should be removed. He hoped to receive a fully satisfactory reply from London within the next few days. Such a reply would immediately be communicated by him to Comrade Molotov. The Ambassador hoped that the Soviet Government would also try not to delay making its final decisions about the Anglo-French draft.

Recorded by *V. Potemkin*

From the archives.

No. 312. Draft Agreement Between Great Britain, France and the USSR Handed by the Ambassador of Great Britain and the Chargé d'Affaires of France in the USSR to the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR

May 27, 1939

The Governments of the United Kingdom, France and the USSR desiring to give effect, in their capacity of Members of the League

of Nations, to the principle of mutual support against aggression which is embodied in the Covenant of the League, have reached the following agreement:

I

If France and the United Kingdom are engaged in hostilities with a European Power, in consequence of either (1) aggression by that Power against another European State which they had, in conformity with the wishes of that State, undertaken to assist against such aggression, (2) assistance given by them to another European State which had requested such assistance in order to resist a violation of its neutrality, or (3) aggression by a European Power against either France or the United Kingdom, the USSR, acting in accordance with the principles of Article 16, paragraphs 1 and 2, of the Covenant of the League of Nations, will give France and the United Kingdom all the support and assistance in its power.

II

If the USSR is engaged in hostilities with a European Power, in consequence of either (1) aggression by that Power against another European State which the USSR had, in conformity with the wishes of that State, undertaken to assist against such aggression, (2) assistance given by the USSR to another European State which had requested such assistance in order to resist a violation of its neutrality, or (3) aggression by a European Power against the USSR, France and the United Kingdom, acting in accordance with the principles of Article 16, paragraphs 1 and 2, of the Covenant of the League of Nations, will give the USSR all the support and assistance in their power.

III

The three Governments will concert together as to the methods by which such mutual support and assistance could, in case of need, be made most effective.

IV

In the event of circumstances arising which threaten to call their undertakings of mutual support and assistance into operation, the three Governments will immediately consult together upon the situation.

The methods and scope of such consultation will at once be the subject of further discussion between the three Governments.

V

It is understood that the rendering of support and assistance in the above cases is without prejudice to the rights and position of other Powers.

VI

The three Governments will communicate to each other the terms of any undertakings referred to in I (1) and I (2) above which they have already given. Any of them which may in future be considering the giving of such an undertaking will consult the other two Governments before doing so, and will communicate to them the terms of any undertaking so given.

VII

This agreement will continue for a period of (5) years from today's date. Not less than (6) months before the expiry of the said period, the three Governments will consult together as to the desirability of renewing it, with or without modifications.

From the archives. Published in *Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939*, Third Series, Vol. V, London, 1952, pp. 679-680.

No. 313. Extract from a Dispatch from the Naval Attaché of Italy in Japan* to the Naval Minister of Italy**

May 27, 1939

[...] If Japan sees the Government of Chiang Kai-shek as her overt enemy, she sees Russia as her enemy No. 1, and an enemy with whom there can never be a truce or a compromise. The European totalitarian states are throwing Bolshevism back to the East, declaring it to be an Asian utopia. Similarly, in East Asia Bolshevism is just as fiercely being thrown back by Japan. Japan knows

* G. Giorgis.

** At that time the Prime Minister of Italy, Mussolini, also held the post of Naval Minister.

that behind Chiang Kai-shek is the long red arm. Victory over Chiang Kai-shek would be of no significance unless Japan were in a position to erect a barrier in Russia's path, to throw her back, and to purge the Far East of Bolshevik influence once and for all.

The Communist ideology has naturally been outlawed in Japan, and the best Japanese army—the Kwantung Army—is stationed on the continent to guard the maritime province. Manchukuo was established as a springboard for an attack on Russia. The recently adopted grandiose programme of extensive rearmament pursues the obvious goal, insofar as the Army is concerned, of bringing it to a state where it could wage war on two fronts, that is, in China and against Russia.

This does not contradict the fact that the Japanese military plan is very remote from a war on two fronts. It is better to fight two enemies separately than simultaneously—particularly if the enemy with whom one has already clashed is putting up resistance, albeit a passive one, yet a resistance that is absorbing considerable energy and causing no small concern. [. .]

From I documenti diplomatici italiani,
Serie 8, Vol. 12, Roma, 1962, pp. 37-38.

No. 314. The International Situation and the Foreign Policy of the USSR. A Report by the Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars and People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR at a Session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR

May 31, 1939

Comrade Deputies, the proposal put forward by the Deputies that this session of the Supreme Soviet should hear a report by the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs is understandable. The international situation has undergone serious changes of late. And from the viewpoint of the peace-loving powers, these changes have considerably worsened the international situation. We are now faced with the results which we all know, of the policy of aggressive states, on the one hand, and of the policy of non-intervention of the democratic countries, on the other. Representatives of the aggressive countries are not averse to bragging of the results of the policy of aggression. In fact, there is certainly no want of bragging in this respect. The representatives of the democratic countries, which have rejected the policy of collective security and which have been pursuing a policy of non-resistance to aggression, are trying to belittle the significance of the present deterioration of

the international situation. They are still engaged mainly in "pacifying" public opinion, pretending that nothing important has occurred in the recent period.

The position of the Soviet Union as regards current international events differs from the position of both sides. As anyone will realize, under no circumstances can it be suspected of harbouring any sympathy for the aggressors. It is also opposed to any slurring over of the real deterioration of the international situation. For us it is clear that attempts to conceal from the public the real changes that have taken place in the world must be countered with a statement of facts. It will then become obvious that "soothing" speeches and articles are needed only by those who do not wish to put a stop to further aggression and who hope to channel aggression, so to say, in a more or less "acceptable" direction.

But recently authoritative representatives of England and France tried to placate public opinion in their countries by glorifying the successes of the ill-fated Munich Agreement. They said that the September agreement in Munich had prevented a European war through relatively small concessions on the part of Czechoslovakia. Many people felt even then that in Munich the representatives of England and France had made more concessions at Czechoslovakia's expense than they had a right to. The Munich Agreement was, so to say, the culmination of the policy of non-intervention, the culmination of compromise with the aggressive countries. And what have been the results of that policy? Has the Munich Agreement checked aggression? Not at all. On the contrary, Germany was not satisfied with the concessions she got in Munich, that is, with the possession of the German-speaking Sudetenland. She simply proceeded to eliminate a big Slav State, namely Czechoslovakia. Not much time had elapsed after the Munich Conference, held in September 1938, before Germany, in March 1939, put an end to the existence of Czechoslovakia. Germany succeeded in carrying this through without opposition from anyone, and so smoothly that one begins to wonder what was the true aim of the conference in Munich.

In any event, the elimination of Czechoslovakia, despite the Munich Agreement, showed the world the results of the policy of non-intervention of which Munich may be said to be its highest point. The failure of that policy has become obvious. In the meantime, the aggressor countries continued to pursue their policy. Germany took Memel and the Memel region away from the Lithuanian Republic. It is common knowledge that Italy did not fall far behind either. In April she did away with the independent State of Albania.

After this there is nothing surprising in the fact that at the end of April the German head of State destroyed two important international treaties with one speech:¹⁰⁹ the Naval Agreement between Germany and England³ and the Non-Aggression Pact between Germany and Poland.²² In the past great international significance had

been attached to these treaties. Yet Germany did away with these treaties very easily and with no regard for any formalities. Such was Germany's answer to the proposal of President Roosevelt¹⁰⁴ of the United States of America, a proposal imbued with the spirit of peace.

But there was more to it than the abrogation of two international treaties. Germany and Italy went further. Several days ago the military-political treaty¹¹⁴ concluded between them was made public. This treaty is basically of an offensive nature. According to the treaty, Germany and Italy are to support one another in any military actions initiated by either of those countries, including any aggression, or any offensive war. Only recently the alliance between Germany and Italy was said to have been brought about by the alleged need for joint struggle against communism. Hence all the fuss about the so-called "Anti-Comintern Pact"²⁴. For a while the anti-Comintern clamour did to a certain extent divert public attention. But now the aggressors no longer consider it necessary to hide behind a screen. The military-political treaty between Germany and Italy says nothing about struggle against the Comintern. Meanwhile the politicians and the press of Germany and Italy are openly saying that the treaty is directed precisely against the main European democratic countries.

It seems clear that the facts cited above attest to a serious deterioration of the international situation.

In this connection certain changes towards resistance to aggression are also becoming discernible in the policy of the non-aggressive states of Europe. It remains to be seen how serious are these changes. At present it is impossible to say whether these countries have a sincere desire to abandon the policy of non-intervention, the policy of non-resistance to further aggression. Will it not happen that the present policy of these countries of limiting aggression to certain areas will fail to serve as a barrier to aggression in other areas? Questions of this kind are being raised in certain organs of the bourgeois press abroad. We, therefore, must be vigilant. We are for peace and for the prevention of further aggression. But we must remember the words of Comrade Stalin: "Caution must be observed so as not to allow our country to be drawn into conflicts by warmongers who are in the habit of getting others to pull the chestnuts out of the fire for them."* It is only by observing caution that we shall be able to safeguard the interests of our country and the interests of universal peace.

There seem, however, to be some signs that the democratic countries of Europe are coming to realise more and more clearly the failure of the policy of non-intervention and the need for more serious searches for ways and means of creating a united front of peace-loving Powers against aggression. In a country like England

* From the report of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union to the 18th Congress of the Party (March 10, 1939).

loud demands are being heard for a drastic change in foreign policy. We, of course, understand the difference between speeches and actual policy. But it is pertinent to note that these speeches are not fortuitous. Here are certain facts. No pact of mutual assistance had existed between England and Poland. Now the decision to conclude such a pact has been taken.* The significance of this agreement is heightened by the denunciation by Germany of her non-aggression pact with Poland. There is no need to deny that the pact of mutual assistance between England and Poland has brought about a change in the European situation. Let us go further. There had been no pact of mutual assistance between England and Turkey, but recently a certain agreement on mutual assistance between England and Turkey has been reached.¹¹¹ This also makes for change in the international situation.

In connection with these new developments the endeavour of the non-aggressive European powers to persuade the USSR to collaborate with them in the cause of resistance to aggression must be considered one of the characteristic features of recent times. This endeavour, of course, merits attention. Thus, the Soviet Government has accepted the proposal of England and France to hold talks on strengthening political relations between the USSR, England and France and on forming a peace front against further aggression.

How do we define our tasks in the present-day international situation? We believe that they accord with the interests of the other non-aggressive countries. They consist in stopping further aggression and creating for this purpose a reliable and effective front of non-aggressive powers.

In connection with the proposals made to us by the English and French Governments, the Soviet Government entered into negotiations with those two Governments about the necessary measures for fighting aggression. This was in the middle of last April. The negotiations which started then have not yet been completed. However, it was clear even then that if there really were a desire to create an effective front of peace-loving countries against aggression, the following conditions must be met as the minimum prerequisites: the conclusion between England, France and the USSR of an effective pact of mutual assistance against aggression having a purely defensive character; a guarantee on the part of England, France and the USSR to the states of Central and Eastern Europe, including all the European countries bordering on the USSR, against an attack by aggressors; the conclusion of an agreement between England, France and the USSR on the forms and extent of immediate and effective assistance to be rendered to one another and to the guaranteed states in the event of an attack by aggressors.

This is our view, which we impose on nobody but for which we stand. We do not demand acceptance of our point of view; we do

* See Document No. 213.

not ask this of anybody. We believe, however, that this point of view corresponds to the security interests of the peace-loving states.

This would be an agreement of a purely defensive character, directed against an attack by the aggressors and totally different from the military and offensive alliance which was recently concluded between Germany and Italy.

It is clear that the principle of reciprocity and equal obligations must form the basis for such an agreement.

It is to be noted that some of the Anglo-French proposals do not reflect a favourable attitude towards this elementary principle. Having guaranteed themselves against a direct attack by aggressors through pacts of mutual assistance between themselves and Poland and having made sure of the assistance of the USSR in the event of an attack by aggressors on Poland and Rumania, the English and the French left open the question whether the USSR in its turn might count on their assistance in the event of a direct attack on it by aggressors. Another question was left open as well, namely, whether England and France could participate in a guarantee of the small states bordering on the USSR and covering the north-western border of the USSR should those states not be in a position to defend their neutrality against an attack by aggressors. Thus, the USSR was placed in an unequal position.

During the last few days new Anglo-French proposals have been received. In these proposals the principle is recognized of mutual assistance between England, France and the USSR on a basis of reciprocity in the event of a direct attack by aggressors. This is of course a step forward. It should be noted, however, that it is hedged about with such reservations, including reservations in respect of certain points of the Covenant of the League of Nations, that it may prove to be a fictitious step forward. As to the question of a guarantee to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the proposals referred to show no progress at all if one considers the question from the standpoint of reciprocity. They provide for assistance to the USSR in regard to the five countries to which the English and the French have already given promises of guarantees, but they say nothing of assistance to the three countries on the north-western borders of the USSR which may not be in a position to defend their neutrality in the event of an attack by aggressors.

The Soviet Union, however, cannot assume obligations in regard to the five countries indicated above if it does not receive guarantees in regard to the three countries situated on its north-western frontiers. This is how matters stand with regard to the negotiations with England and France.

While conducting negotiations with England and France, we see no necessity for refusing to have commercial relations with such countries as Germany and Italy. At the beginning of last year, on the initiative of the German Government, talks began on a trade agreement and new credits. At that time Germany offered to grant us a new credit of 200 million marks. Inasmuch as we did not come

to terms about this new economic agreement at the time, the matter was removed from the order of the day. At the end of 1938 the German Government again raised the question of economic negotiations and of the granting of a credit of 200 million marks. The German offer was accompanied by readiness to make certain concessions. At the beginning of 1939 the People's Commissariat for Foreign Trade was informed that a special German representative, Herr Schnurre,* was leaving for Moscow in connection with these negotiations. But thereafter the negotiations were confided to the German Ambassador in Moscow, Herr von Schulenburg, and they were suspended owing to differences of opinion. Now there are indications that the talks may be resumed.

I can also add that recently a trade agreement for 1939 was signed with Italy. It is of advantage to both countries.

It will be recalled that in last February a special communiqué was published confirming the development of good-neighbourly relations between the USSR and Poland. A certain general improvement is to be noted in our relations with Poland. On the other hand, the trade agreement concluded in March could considerably increase the trade turnover between the USSR and Poland.

Our relations with friendly Turkey are developing normally. Comrade Potemkin's recent visit to Ankara for purposes of exchanging information proved to be extremely useful.

Of the international questions that have lately acquired a great significance for the USSR, I should like to dwell upon the question of the Aaland Islands. You will recall that for over 100 years these islands had belonged to Russia. As a result of the October Revolution Finland obtained her independence. Under a treaty with our country Finland also obtained title to the Aaland Islands. In 1921 ten countries, namely, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Poland, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, England, France and Italy, signed a convention prohibiting, as had been the case previously, the fortification of the Aaland Islands. The governments of the capitalist countries did this without the participation of Soviet representatives. In 1921, weakened by the war and the foreign intervention, the Soviet Republic could only protest against that illegal act in regard to the USSR. But even then we clearly and repeatedly stated that the Soviet Union could not be indifferent to this question and that a modification of the legal status of the Aaland Islands was impossible without violation of the interests of our country.

The importance of the Aaland Islands lies in their strategic position in the Baltic Sea. The fortification of the Aaland Islands could be used for purposes hostile to the USSR. Situated not far from the entrance to the Gulf of Finland, the Aaland Islands, if fortified, could serve to close off for the USSR the entrances to and exits from the Gulf of Finland. Therefore, now that the Finnish

* Head of the Eastern European Section of the Economic Policy Department of the German Foreign Ministry.

Government, together with Sweden, wants to carry out an extensive plan for the fortification of the Aaland Islands, the Soviet Government has made a request to the Finnish Government for information about the objectives and the character of the contemplated fortifications. Instead of meeting this entirely natural request of the Soviet Union, the Finnish Government refused to provide the USSR with the relevant information and explanation. It is not difficult to see that the accompanying references to considerations of military secrecy are quite unconvincing. The Finnish Government did after all, communicate its plan for the fortification of the Aaland Islands to another government, namely, the Government of Sweden. And it not only communicated that plan, but also involved the Swedish Government in the carrying out of this fortification plan. But under the Convention of 1921 Sweden enjoys no special rights in this respect. On the other hand, the Soviet Union has a greater interest in the question of the fortification of the Aaland Islands than Sweden.

At the request of the Finnish and Swedish Governments, the question of revising the 1921 Convention was discussed at the recent session of the League of Nations Council without whose sanction the Convention cannot be revised since the ten-nation Convention was concluded on the basis of the relevant decision of the League of Nations Council of June 24, 1921. Owing to the objections raised by the representative of the Soviet Union, the Council of the League was unable to reach unanimity necessary for the adoption of any decision by the Council. The results of the discussion in the Council of the League are well known. The League of Nations Council turned down the proposal of Finland and Sweden. It did not sanction the revision of the 1921 Convention. The Finnish Government must surely draw the appropriate conclusion from this. In the light of recent international events the Aaland question has assumed a particularly large significance for the Soviet Union. We do not consider it possible to reconcile ourselves to any disregard for the interests of the USSR in this matter which is of great importance for the defence of our country.

I shall now speak very briefly on the questions of the Far East and on our relations with Japan.

Here of the greatest significance during this past year were our negotiations with Japan on the fisheries question. It is common knowledge that in the Maritime Province, in the Sea of Okhotsk, on Sakhalin and on Kamchatka the Japanese have large numbers of fisheries on our territory. By the end of last year they numbered as many as 384. In the meantime, the period of the convention on whose basis the Japanese had received these fishing areas had expired. In the case of many fishing areas the lease periods previously agreed on had also run out. Thus, the Soviet Government entered into negotiations with Japan on the fisheries question. Our side declared that a certain number of areas whose lease periods had run out could no longer be placed at the disposal of the Japanese

in view of strategic considerations. Despite the obvious validity of our position, it was strenuously opposed by the Japanese side. After protracted negotiations 37 fishing areas were taken away from the Japanese and they were given ten new areas in other localities. Following this the convention was prolonged for another year. This agreement with Japan on the fisheries question is of great political significance, especially since Japanese reactionary circles did all they could to emphasize the political aspect of this matter, even to the point of making all kinds of threats. The Japanese reactionaries had had an opportunity once again to convince themselves, however, that threats against the Soviet Union are pointless, and that the rights of the Soviet State are well protected.

Now a few words about border questions. It would seem high time for those concerned to realize that the Soviet Government will not tolerate any provocations by Japano-Manchurian military units on its borders. Today it is necessary to recall this in respect of the borders of the Mongolian People's Republic as well. In accordance with the Treaty of Mutual Assistance concluded between the USSR and the Mongolian People's Republic, we consider it our duty to render the Mongolian People's Republic the necessary assistance for guarding her borders. We take a serious view of such things as mutual assistance treaties signed by the Soviet Government. I must give warning that by virtue of the Treaty of Mutual Assistance concluded between us we shall defend the borders of the Mongolian People's Republic just as resolutely as our own borders. It is high time to realize that the charges of aggression advanced by Japan against the Government of the Mongolian People's Republic are ridiculous and absurd. It is also high time to realize that there is a limit to anyone's patience. It would therefore be best of all to give up in good time the recurrent provocative violations of the borders of the USSR and the MPR by Japano-Manchurian military units. An appropriate warning has also been made by us through the Japanese Ambassador in Moscow.

There is no need for me to speak about our attitude to China. You are fully aware of Comrade Stalin's statement about support for peoples that have fallen victim to aggression and that fight for the independence of their country.⁸⁰ This applies in full measure to China and to her struggle for national independence. We are consistently pursuing this policy. It is fully in line with the tasks facing us in Europe, namely, the tasks of creating a united front of peace-loving powers against further aggression.

The USSR is no longer what it was, say, in 1921, when it had only just started carrying out peaceful constructive work. One is compelled to recall this fact because to this day even many of our neighbours are evidently unable to realise this. Nor can one fail to see that the USSR is no longer what it was a mere five or ten years ago, and that the USSR has grown stronger. The foreign policy of the Soviet Union should reflect the changes in the international situation and the increased strength of the USSR as a powerful

factor of peace. It goes without saying that the foreign policy of the Soviet Union is fundamentally peace-loving and directed against aggression. The aggressive countries themselves know this better than anyone else. Belatedly and hesitantly some democratic powers are becoming aware of this simple fact. The Soviet Union is entitled to a place in the vanguard of the united front of the peace-loving states that are really opposed to aggression.

From *Third Session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. May 25-31, 1939. Stenographic Report, Moscow, 1939, pp. 467-476.*

No. 315. Draft Agreement Between Great Britain, France and the USSR Handed by the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR to the Ambassador of Great Britain and the Chargé d'Affaires of France in the USSR

June 2, 1939

The Governments of Great Britain, France and the USSR seeking to give effect to the principles of mutual support against aggression adopted by the League of Nations, have come to the following agreement:

1. France, England and the USSR undertake to render to each other immediately all effective assistance should one of these States become involved in hostilities with a European Power as a result of either (1) aggression by that Power against any one of these three States, (2) aggression by that Power against Belgium, Greece, Turkey, Rumania, Poland, Latvia, Estonia and Finland, whom England, France and the USSR have agreed to undertake to defend against aggression, or (3) assistance rendered by one of these three States to another European State which had requested such assistance in order to resist a violation of its neutrality.
2. The three States will come to an agreement within the shortest possible time as to the methods, forms and extent of assistance which is to be rendered by them in conformity with paragraph 1.
3. In the event of circumstances arising which, in the opinion of one of the contracting parties, create a threat of aggression by a European Power, the three States will immediately consult together to examine the situation and in case of necessity to establish in common the moment for putting into immediate

- effect the mechanism of mutual assistance and the manner of its application independently of any procedure applied by the League of Nations to the examination of questions.
4. The three States will communicate to each other the texts of all their undertakings assumed in the spirit of the obligations provided for under paragraph 1 in respect of European States. If one of these States should contemplate in the future the possibility of assuming new obligations of a similar character it will first consult the other two States and communicate to them the contents (text) of the agreement.
 5. In the event of the commencement of joint operations against aggression in accordance with paragraph 1 the three States undertake to conclude an armistice or peace only by joint agreement.
 6. This agreement enters into force simultaneously with the agreement which is to be concluded in virtue of paragraph 2.
 7. This agreement will continue in force for a period of five years from today's date. Not less than six months before the expiry of this period the three States will consider whether they wish to renew it with or without modifications.

From the archives.

No. 316. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in France to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the USSR

June 3, 1939

Daladier began the conversation by saying that he had fully associated himself and continued to associate himself with all the three basic conditions which we had put forth in our first reply to the English.* It was in this spirit that he had held talks with Halifax in Paris and had tried to convince the latter that as regards French interests he considered Moscow's demands to be reasonable. He added that for him personally the most important thing was the military commission to which he attached far greater significance than to the agreement as a whole. It was the Paris discussions that had produced the latest Franco-English draft** which also fell far short of satisfying him, particularly because of the reference to Article 16 of the League of Nations Covenant. He had at first objected to this reference and had agreed to include it in the general

* See Document No. 291.

** See Document No. 312.

draft only after the English had assured him that the procedure of the League would not be applied and that the obligation would operate automatically. In coming negotiations he would support any Moscow wording that ruled out ambiguity.

The question of the Baltic States was somewhat more difficult. The main argument of the English was that for a country to be rendered assistance it was necessary for that country to request such assistance and be prepared to defend itself.

The English were also afraid of "complicating the position of the small countries" by drawing them into broad combinations. He personally would be inclined (he did not know yet if the English would go along with him) to work out a broader formula covering all eventual cases of aggression in approximately the following form:

"The parties undertake to render each other immediate assistance in the event of a direct attack on European soil on any of the contracting parties or in the event of any of the parties being involved in hostilities in consequence of the assistance rendered by it to any European country subjected to direct or indirect aggression."

In this way it was possible to completely avoid enumerating the States and differentiating between those that had already received a guarantee or would make such a request and those that had not yet done so.

Daladier added that he had only had a quick look at the modifications you introduced yesterday but wanted me to tell you that he was "prepared to go a long way for the sake of speedily achieving a clear and unambiguous military agreement." Therefore, "though the sharp tone of Molotov's speech* will not be to the liking of many people here," he personally appreciated his directness. He believed that a form of expression had been found "which is necessary today, especially for England".

Ambassador

From the archives.

No. 317. Telegram from the Soviet Chargé d'Affaires in Rumania to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the USSR

June 3, 1939

It has been officially announced that after the forthcoming holiday on June 8 Gafencu is leaving on an official visit to Ankara and Athens. According to rumours emanating from journalistic

* See Document No. 314.

circles, the visit is being undertaken to obtain information about the foreign policy changes that have taken place there and in connection with the latest talks with Markovic.¹²¹ The Yugoslav Regent, Paul, is arriving in Bucharest for the June 8 holiday and those same journalistic circles are saying that he will endeavour to persuade the Rumanian King not to accept Soviet guarantees to Rumania. Yugoslavia will also reject Anglo-Franco-Soviet guarantees. It is also believed that on German initiative, there will be a discussion about the Anglo-Turkish agreement¹¹¹ which allegedly does not conform to the Balkan Entente.⁸² It is believed that Regent Paul will urge the Rumanian King to take a cool line towards Turkey.

Chargé d'Affaires

From the archives.

No. 318. Memorandum of a Conversation Between the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR and the Latvian Minister in the USSR

June 5, 1939

Kocins asked me for clarification on the question of guarantees for the Balts about which negotiations were in progress between the USSR, England and France. He particularly wanted to know whether the negotiations related to guaranteeing Latvia's neutrality and also why Latvia was ignored while the negotiations were being conducted. I explained that our negotiations with England and France related precisely to guaranteeing Latvia's neutrality. As regards the second question, I said that at this stage the negotiations were proceeding only between the USSR, England and France but that in the future, when we had reached understanding with England and France on the question of guaranteeing the Balts, we would ask Latvia and the other Balts about their attitude to these guarantees. Kocins expressed satisfaction with my explanations and said that Latvia was favourably inclined towards the guaranteeing of her neutrality, provided the guarantees were commonly given (i. e., not by the USSR alone).

In reply to a remark by Kocins that from the newspapers he had gathered the impression that the question of guarantees advanced by the USSR was at present the stumbling bloc in the negotiations with England and France, I said that this was not the case. I explained that England and France had proposed our offering guarantees to Poland and Rumania and that we, for our part, had put it to England and France that the guarantees should cover all

the other European countries bordering on the USSR as well. In our negotiations with England and France a positive solution had been found for the principal question, namely, the question of mutual assistance between the USSR, England and France on a reciprocal basis. Now, among other matters, the question of guaranteeing the Balts was being discussed. On this question England and France had not yet given any reply,¹²² which meant that they had not given a negative reply to our proposal about guaranteeing the Balts. This question was therefore in the discussion stage.

From the archives.

No. 319. Memorandum of a Conversation Between the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR and the Estonian Minister in the USSR

June 5, 1939

Rei began by explaining the reasons for, and the nature of, the non-aggression pact to be signed shortly between Estonia and Germany. Rei said that the non-aggression pact between Estonia and Germany would be of the same nature as the recently signed non-aggression pact between Germany and Denmark. I said that it was noteworthy that Finland had refused to conclude a non-aggression pact with Germany while Estonia and Latvia had accepted the pact. I also said that we would form our opinion of the pact on the basis of the significance it acquired in reality.

Then Rei posed the same question as Kocins, only emphasizing still more strongly that during the negotiations about guaranteeing the Balts, the Balts themselves were being ignored. I gave him the same explanations I had given Kocins. I also indicated that we would form our judgement as to Estonia's position on the question of neutrality on the basis of Estonia's response to the proposal for a triple guarantee of Estonia's neutrality. I said that we had some doubts as to how consistently Estonia was pursuing a policy of neutrality since it was hard to imagine that a small country like Estonia would want to preserve her neutrality and at the same time maintain an identical attitude both to non-aggressive countries like the USSR, England and France, and to aggressive countries like Germany. Rei answered that Estonia was only formally maintaining an identical attitude to both the first and second groups of countries mentioned, but that in reality in the event of an attack by an aggressor it would count on the assistance of the non-aggressive countries and, first of all, on assistance by the USSR. To this

I replied that Estonia could not count on anyone rendering her assistance against aggression at the very first moment she should ask for such assistance and on a scale she might wish until Estonia took the appropriate advance steps.

From the archives.

No. 320. Telegram from the German Ambassador in Japan to the State Secretary of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Germany

June 7, 1939

I hear in strict confidence from an absolutely reliable Army source that, on the evening of June 5, instructions were despatched by telegram to Ambassador Oshima. According to this, Japan would be prepared to take part automatically in any war of Germany's, provided Russia were one of Germany's adversaries. Should Russia, in a conflict between Germany and third Powers, remain neutral, Japan would only enter the war if and when it were agreed that her entry was in the common interest of the Allies. My confidant emphasized that the Army and the Navy had, after long negotiations, reached agreement on the above solution. This represents substantial progress, as the Navy has dropped its previous reservation, making Japan's entry into war against the Western Powers dependent exclusively upon Japanese interests.

Ott

From *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945*, Series D, Vol. VI, p. 656.

No. 321. Memorandum of a Conversation Between the Polish Ambassador in Japan and the Japanese Minister for Foreign Affairs

June 7, 1939

I began the conversation by recalling the official statement made to the Minister on April 24 last to the effect that the policy of my Government in respect of Japan, on the one hand, and the USSR,

on the other, had undergone no change. This statement had not lost its validity despite the changes that had taken place in Europe in the meantime. Would not the Minister now be inclined, on the basis of reciprocity, and in the light of the latest decisions of the Japanese Government, to authorize me to assure my Government that the friendly attitude of Japan to Poland had likewise remained unchanged.

M. Arita hastened to give me an affirmative reply but asked that two observations be added to it: (1) the Japanese Government was anxious to see the complications that had arisen between Poland and Germany resolved in a peaceful manner, and (2) the Anti-Comintern Pact²⁴ had given rise to an atmosphere of friendship between Japan, Germany and Italy which transcended the limits of the Pact. In reply to several of my questions he made it clear that what he had in mind was the general mood, not any concrete obligations on matters not covered by anti-communist co-operation, least of all on questions that might in any way relate to the Polish-German disputes.

The Minister, in turn, asked me whether any Polish-German negotiations had been initiated in consequence of the mutual clarification of positions contained in the speeches by Hitler and Minister Beck. I replied that I was unaware of this but that it was my impression that the German Government had as yet not reacted to the memorandum of the Polish Government¹¹⁰ handed to it on May 5 in reply to the German memorandum of April 28. My Government was always prepared to enter into negotiations on the terms set out in that reply. But since claims were being presented not by us against Germany but by Germany against us, she should probably be the one to show an initiative in respect of negotiations. In this connection Arita surmised that Germany was hesitating because her prestige would be hurt by too hasty a search for agreement and it would look as if she were acting under the pressure of an Anglo-Polish alliance. If this were so, I replied, we could wait, although in the meantime the atmosphere was becoming increasingly tense and international developments were unfolding at a rapid pace, which would doubtless make it more and more difficult to reach agreement as time went on. In reply to Arita's question whether there was any truth in the rumour that had reached him about Germans being hounded by Poles in Gdansk, I said that questions of security and public order in Gdansk were the prerogative of the local authorities which were made up from amongst the German population and were completely independent of Poland. Consequently, if anyone in the territory of the Free City was being oppressed on nationality grounds, it could only be the Polish minority.

I added that I was amazed by the effects of the policy pursued by Germany under anti-Comintern slogans. The Western Powers, for instance, were now seeking the friendship of the Soviets which until recently had been in complete political isolation while Poland,

without which no anti-Soviet action in Europe, could be contemplated, even by Germany, had been confronted with the necessity of countering the unexpected German claims. Should these claims be buttressed by force, Poland would unhesitatingly offer armed resistance. Even if it were assumed that in a war with Poland the scales would be tipped in Germany's favour, in the final analysis Germany's defeat in a general conflict was inevitable. A striking contrast could be observed between the strivings for peace in Europe and for the defence of the European civilization against subversive activities by the Third International, and the strivings of Germany to absorb, to the detriment of the most vital interests of Poland, three hundred thousand Gdansk Germans who were themselves exercising power—both on the national question and in the political field—according to Berlin's instructions. The Third Reich's foreign policy in this sphere could only be explained by considerations of prestige and by the need of the National Socialist leaders for more and more successes.

In substance Minister Arita was unable to call in question the above-outlined arguments which I presented most forcefully. He therefore merely remarked that the Japanese Government maintained an equally friendly attitude to Poland and to Germany, and that it could not take any position on the questions now dividing the two countries and was compelled to limit itself to rendering such assistance as was within its power in getting these differences removed, in which it was highly interested. In answer to my question whether this assistance had assumed, or could assume, some concrete form Arita said that unfortunately the Japanese Government was not familiar enough with the Polish-German problems to be in a position to speak out on the matter. When I observed that it did after all have its ambassadors in Warsaw and in Berlin as its informants, he admitted that the ambassadors felt that for the time being the circumstances and the moods on both sides did not encourage the idea of Japanese mediation, and that consequently the idea could not be carried into effect.

In the course of further discussion we passed to the question of the Anglo-Soviet negotiations which, Arita emphasized, were now giving the Japanese Government more cause for concern than anything else. I recalled that in this matter my Government had given London a good deal of advice and no small number of warnings, and that it had even taken a number of steps aimed at getting England and France to officially assure Japan that the negotiations with the USSR would not relate to the Far East, and that finally we, for our part, did not intend to participate in any new agreements with the Soviets. We could not, however, prevent our Western allies from seeking new ways of strengthening security wherever they felt it to be necessary for themselves. Particularly convincing was the English argument that it was necessary to draw the Soviets over to their side at least in order to prevent a German-Soviet rapprochement. "I believe this," Arita said, interrupting me. To this I

replied that I did not attach too much significance to this, though I could confidentially inform him that my Government had information to the effect that it was precisely this question that interested the leaders of the Rome-Berlin Axis.

Obviously perplexed, Minister Arita told me that he highly appreciated the role Poland was playing in respect of the Soviets and felt certain that this role would not change in the future. Russia was not just a European state, as territorially she extended all the way to the Asian Far East. Consequently, the strengthening of the security of her borders in Europe should give Russia considerable freedom of action in Asia—something that Japan could not be indifferent to. In the light of this any assurance that the agreements with the USSR contained no non-European obligations would be meaningless formality. I observed in reply that in my view Great Britain had had more than enough bitter experience in the struggle against the subversive influence of the Soviets in British India, Afghanistan and Iran for her not to be on guard and not to be wary of what would, for her, be a dangerous involvement with the USSR in Asia. Western and Central Asia were one thing, Arita replied, and China and the Manchurian frontier zone were another. English policy was playing with Soviet danger. In her desire to find a new, but illusory, friend England would lose an old one. "Whom do you have in mind?" I asked. "I leave that for you to reflect upon. Perhaps Japan, perhaps Poland, and perhaps both," he said with a grin. We had just now clarified Poland's position, I observed. As for Japan, I feared that in connection with the present situation in China England was insufficiently aware of the importance of friendship with Japan to be guided in her Russian policy by the fear of losing it. Also, to thank Arita for his statement about Japan's role in the Polish-German disputes, I said that Poland naturally would not take a position on the Anglo-Japanese conflict in China but that she was anxious to see its amicable settlement.

Though all this was said and listened to in more of a bantering spirit than anything else, Arita then resolutely stated that the conclusion by any state of an alliance with the Soviets would be regarded by the Japanese Government as an act that violated the vital interests of Japan and required the elaboration by her of a clear-cut position on the new situation created by such an act. Realizing that this statement was linked with the recent decisions taken by the Hiranuma Cabinet, I tried to learn whether the method of Japan's reaction to a probable act of this kind had already been decided on. To this the Minister replied that this was a question that still required examination as the matter depended on the conditions in which the agreement between England and France and the USSR was concluded. I then asked how he explained the fact that the Soviets were not giving their assent to the conclusion of this agreement. In reply he advanced the supposition that they were interested in full reciprocity in matters of guaranteeing the

security of their own borders and the inviolability of other states which enjoyed mutual guarantees.

Finally, in reply to my question about the present state of Japanese-Soviet relations, he said that leaving aside the recent most serious armed clashes on the Mongolian border, the negotiations on the fisheries question and on the rights of Japanese in northern Sakhalin by no means testified either to the good will of the USSR or to its desire to come to agreement. I made another attempt to enquire about the Japanese Cabinet meeting and asked Arita whether in his view there was any connection between Japan's policy in China and her attitude to European affairs, and vice versa. After some reflection, Arita replied that such a connection undoubtedly existed but he avoided a discussion on this subject.

At the close of the conversation I referred to Arita's repeated statements about the anxiety of the Japanese Government lest European affairs should reach the point of war and asked whether that anxiety had led to any concrete plan or action, for instance, a joint plan or action with other Powers concerned (I meant the United States). Arita replied that in principle such an idea was very much to his liking but that for the time being he saw no conditions for carrying it out.

From the archives.

No. 322. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in Britain to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the USSR

June 8, 1939

Halifax asked me to call on him today and informed me that the British Government was anxious to have a treaty concluded between the three Powers as soon as possible. It was with this in mind that the British Government believed it expedient to adopt a somewhat different method of negotiation: instead of exchanging Notes at a distance, which inevitably involved loss of time, the English proposed to hold talks with you round the table in Moscow, to discuss the draft agreement point by point and to find in the course of the talks formulas acceptable to both sides. The British Government was authorizing Seeds to conduct these negotiations and had wanted to summon him to London to give him the necessary instructions. But as Seeds was ill with influenza, it had been

decided to send to Moscow the Head of the Central Department of the Foreign Office, Strang, who was familiar with all the details of the present Anglo-Franco-Soviet negotiations from the start. Furthermore, Strang was very adept at drafting all manner of diplomatic documents and formulas. Strang's task would be to thoroughly inform Seeds of the views and sentiments of the English Government in respect of the Anglo-Soviet negotiations and also to help him in the conduct of the negotiations. Strang would be leaving for Moscow early next week, that is, around June 12 or 14. Halifax expressed the hope that this new method of conducting the negotiations would lead quickly to a final agreement.

As regards our latest proposals,* Halifax made three comments:

1. Within the last few days the British Government had been in contact with the Baltic countries and it had come to the conclusion that none of them (particularly the Finns) wanted an open guarantee. Therefore, the British Government considered it impossible to accept our proposal for a listing of the countries to be guaranteed. On the other hand, acknowledging that our demand in respect of the Baltic region was essentially justified, it wanted to look for a compromise formula on the lines set out by Chamberlain in yesterday's statement, namely, that no mention should be made in the document of any of the guaranteed countries and that it should simply say that the pact obligations take effect in the event of a direct or indirect threat to the security of one of the parties to the agreement. The details of the formula could be elaborated in Moscow.

2. The British Government had great doubts about our demand for the simultaneous signing of the pact and of an agreement on military measures, for this would delay the conclusion of the treaty for a considerable period of time and in the present international situation this would be dangerous. The British Government was prepared immediately to begin negotiations on military measures but considered it necessary to sign the treaty as soon as agreement on it was reached, or at least to issue a communique similar to the one published in connection with the Polish and Turkish negotiations.

3. The British Government also had some doubts regarding the clause providing for the obligation not to conclude a separate armistice, but Halifax did not elaborate on this subject in any detail and observed in general that it should not be difficult to settle this question.

In the course of the conversation Halifax mentioned that the Finns had, allegedly, authorized the Swedes to conduct negotiations with us on behalf of both countries on the question of the Aaland Islands, and also that some people had advised him to go to Mos-

* See Document No. 315.

cow himself in connection with the negotiations, but he was opposed in principle to frequent and lengthy absences of the Foreign Secretary from his country and that at this particular time the complexity of the international situation chained him to London.

Ambassador

From the archives.

No. 323. Telegram from the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR to the Soviet Ambassador in Britain

June 10, 1939

Tell Halifax the following in reply to his statement:*

We take note of the decision of the British Government to send Strang to Moscow.

To avoid misunderstandings we consider it necessary to make it clear that the question of the three Baltic States is a question without whose satisfactory solution it would be impossible to bring the negotiations to a conclusion. We feel that without guaranteeing the security of the northwestern borders of the USSR by providing for decisive counteraction by the three contracting parties against any direct or indirect attack by an aggressor on Estonia, Latvia or Finland it will be impossible to satisfy public opinion in the Soviet Union, particularly now that the Soviet Government's position has been officially endorsed by the Supreme Soviet. Explain to Halifax that this is not a question of technical formulas but one of agreeing on the substance of the question, after which it will not be difficult to find a suitable formula.

As regards the question of the simultaneous signing of the basic treaty and the special agreement, it could be settled in the course of the negotiations.

As regards what Halifax said about someone having advised him to go to Moscow, you may drop him a hint that his coming would be welcomed in Moscow.

People's Commissar

From the archives.

* See Document No. 322.

No. 324. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in Britain to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the USSR

June 10, 1939

Polish Ambassador Raczynski called on me today. He wanted to know about the progress of the Anglo-Soviet negotiations and said that the Polish Government was convinced of the sincerity of British intentions to create a "peace front" against aggression.

Among other things, Raczynski said that the preliminary agreement between England and Poland published on April 6* so far remained in force and that they had not embarked on the conclusion of a final treaty though this would probably be done very shortly. The Poles wanted a permanent treaty signed as soon as possible and the English seemed to feel the same on this matter. Military negotiations between the two countries had already started in Warsaw where a British mission had been sent, and a Polish mission was expected soon in London. Reports about a visit by Smigly-Rydz to England were premature but he might come in September for the English military manoeuvres. However, the military negotiations would be held whether or not a visit by Smigly-Rydz took place. In the very near future the Poles would begin official negotiations in London on the subject of credits, mainly for arms purchases. Raczynski said that the phrase about "direct or indirect threats" to independence had been written into the Anglo-Polish agreement on the suggestion of the English in order that the agreement could be put into operation in the event of Germany taking action against Danzig which was formally a Free City and not a part of Polish territory. It had been agreed between the Poles and the English that Poland would be the judge as to whether an action taken by Germany in respect of Danzig constituted an "indirect threat" that called for Polish response. England, on the other hand, undertook to render Poland support in such actions as the latter might consider necessary to take. This had not been set down anywhere but such was the agreement and that was precisely how the Poles understood their rights under the agreement. In a conversation with Raczynski two days ago Chamberlain had complained that the Soviet Government was dragging out the negotiations for the pact, but I explained to the Polish Ambassador who was really to blame for their delay.

Ambassador

From the archives.

* See Document No. 213.

No. 325. An Editorial from "Pravda": "The Question of the Defence of the Three Baltic Countries Against Aggression"

June 13, 1939

The foreign press continues to comment on the speech by Comrade Molotov in the Supreme Soviet of the USSR.* The part of Comrade Molotov's speech most widely commented on is that which deals with assistance by England, France and the USSR to the three Baltic countries—Estonia, Latvia and Finland—in the event these countries are attacked and prove incapable of upholding their neutrality.

At first some foreign journalists thought that the question concerning the three Baltic countries was far-fetched and had been artificially dragged in for some unknown reasons. Now, however, they are compelled to acknowledge that such an appraisal was wrong and that the question of maintaining the neutrality of the three Baltic countries is of vital importance for the Soviet Union's security.

Others contended that while the question of the three Baltic countries interested the Soviet Union it was of no great concern for France and England. Soon, however, they too had to admit that they had been wrong. It became obvious in the course of the discussion that France and England were no less interested in maintaining the neutrality of the three Baltic countries than the Soviet Union. Even a politician like the English Conservative, Churchill, was compelled to acknowledge the paramount significance of that question for France and England. Speaking in favour of guarantees to Latvia, Estonia and Finland, Churchill said:

"It is beyond doubt that if these countries were invaded by the Germans or else were exploded from inside by fascist propaganda and intrigues, the whole of Europe would be involved in war... Should their independence or integrity be threatened by the German fascists, Poland must fight, Great Britain and France must fight, the USSR must fight."**

But while acknowledging in principle the correctness of what Comrade Molotov said about assistance to the Baltic countries, a large number of foreign journalists fail to draw the appropriate practical conclusion from it when they come to the question of a triple guarantee of the neutrality of those countries.

Some said that such a guarantee would not be in the interests of Estonia, Latvia and Finland, that the peoples of those countries did not need outside assistance and that they were capable of upholding their independence against any aggression. This is, of course, wrong, to say the least. If a state like Czechoslovakia, which

* See Document No. 314.

** Retranslated from the Russian.

had a population and an army twice as large as the population and the army of the three Baltic countries taken together, was unable to defend herself against aggression, when left to her own devices, what grounds are there for assuming that the three small Baltic states are capable of doing more than Czechoslovakia, and that they are not in need of assistance from other states? There can be no question that the people of the three Baltic countries are vitally interested in a guarantee of their independence by the great peace-loving powers.

Others are saying that the acceptance by the three Baltic countries of assistance from the great powers would mean the loss of their sovereignty, the loss of their independence. This is nonsense, of course. All peace-loving states are seeking assistance from one another against aggression. England has been guaranteed assistance by France, Poland and Turkey. All those countries, in their turn, have been guaranteed assistance by England. Then there is also Belgium, whose neutrality has been guaranteed by England and France, and Rumania and Greece whose independence has been guaranteed by England. Does this mean that those countries, having received external guarantees, have thereby forfeited their sovereignty and lost their independence? It suffices to squarely pose this question to realize how absurd such an objection is.

Finally, some Anglo-French journalists are saying that official representatives of the three Baltic countries have refused to accept help from the peace-loving powers, that they do not want to have such assistance, and that therefore it would be wrong to impose the assistance of the peace-loving powers upon those countries. It is common knowledge that this argument is also being resorted to by the Foreign Minister of Estonia, Selter and the Foreign Minister of Finland, Erkko. It seems to us that here we have either a case of misunderstanding or of a poorly concealed desire on the part of certain politicians to prevent the establishment of a defensive front of peace-loving powers against aggression.

We have already said that the people of Estonia, Latvia and Finland are in great need of assistance from the peace-loving states in the event of a direct or an indirect attack on them by an aggressor. This is a self-evident truth which certainly needs no proving. How then can one explain the rejection by Messrs. Selter and Erkko of assistance of the peace-loving powers? Perhaps it is due to an underestimation by those politicians of the threat of aggression. We have recently had to contend with a similar case of underestimation on the part of Rumania and Poland, some of whose representatives objected both to a guarantee by the Soviet Union and, as we were told, to the conclusion of a pact of mutual assistance between England, France and the USSR. Circumstances have, however, removed those objections. It is not impossible that this may in the near future prove to be the case with certain representatives of the three Baltic countries as well, both because the threat of aggression is becoming ever more obvious (and on this subject

a good deal of useful information could be gathered from the well-known message of President Roosevelt of the USA¹⁰⁴) and because the fundamental interests of the three Baltic countries, which require the assistance of the peace-loving countries against aggression, will have a more and more telling effect.

But there may be another explanation for the behaviour of the Estonian and Finnish politicians mentioned above. It is quite possible that certain outside influences are involved here, if not direct inspiration from those who want to impede the formation of a broad defensive front against aggression. It is difficult to say at present just who the inspirers are: the aggressive states that want to prevent the setting up of an anti-aggression front, or certain reactionary circles in the democratic states that seek to confine aggression to certain areas but not to prevent it from breaking out in others.¹²⁰ It is significant that even a right-wing French bourgeois journalist like Henri de Kérillis considers such an explanation to be the most likely one. This is what he writes in the newspaper *L'Époque*:

"In respect of guarantees to the Baltic countries the Soviet Union's demands are absolutely legitimate and quite logical. If France and England are in favour of an agreement with the Soviet Union they would not want to see the Soviet Union suffer in the very first days of the war in consequence of German intervention through the territory of the Baltic countries. It is essential that we should know what we are striving for: do we or do we not want to conclude an alliance with the USSR? ... If we want that alliance we must do everything to prevent Germany from gaining a foothold in Riga, Tallinn and Helsinki, as well as on the Aaland Islands. It is said that neither Finland, nor Estonia or Latvia wants to have Franco-Anglo-Soviet guarantees. What sort of devilry is this? If they do not want to have these guarantees it means there are all the more grounds for concern. The aforesaid Baltic countries, two of which are lilliputian countries, are incapable of assuring their independence without outside help. And if they are asserting the opposite, it means they have entered into the German orbit. The Soviet Union wants to oppose this. We must act likewise."

It thus appears that the last objections to the aforesaid argument advanced in Comrade Molotov's report concerning the defence of the three Baltic countries against aggression are just as groundless from the standpoint of the interests of the anti-aggressive front of peace-loving powers as are all the previous objections.

It is clear from the foregoing that the position of the Soviet Union on the question of defending the three Baltic countries against aggression is the only correct position which fully corresponds to the interests of all peace-loving countries, including those of Estonia, Latvia and Finland.

From *Pravda*, No. 162 (7847),
June 13, 1939.

No. 326. Memorandum of a Conversation Between the State Secretary of the German Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the British Ambassador in Germany

June 13, 1939

The British Ambassador, who was talking to me today about an alleged currency offence by his German servant, presently turned the conversation to his anxiety as to how we could survive the summer without a conflict. Henderson conducted the conversation as a private one, and did not make it clear where his own views stopped and official ones began. Towards the end, he was unquestionably representing Halifax's views, whereas in the first part of the conversation he expressed criticism of British policy in Warsaw and Moscow.

It is well known that for some days the press has been referring to a report by Henderson who is said to wish to expedite the treaty negotiations with Moscow. Without going into this, Henderson made a statement to the following effect: While negotiations between London and Moscow were in progress, a conversation between London and Berlin was of course impossible. Once the Russian pact was concluded, discussions with Berlin should be easier. By this Henderson presumably meant to say something like *The Times* did, namely, that strength and willingness to negotiate were quite compatible with each other; without strength Britain was perhaps not even a suitable partner for negotiations.

On the subject of Britain's pact with Russia, I made a few remarks ridiculing its advantages for Britain, and a very serious one on its effect in promoting war, particularly in Poland. British policy, I said, was diametrically opposed to Henderson's own thesis, which he had already repeatedly stated in public: "England wants the sea for herself, the continent of Europe can be left to Germany". Instead of this, the fact was that Britain was now undertaking greater and greater commitments on the Continent; for instance, she was allowing the Poles to gamble with her destiny. If there were any logic in British policy at all, the only logic I could see was that England was resolved on a preventive war and was working for it.

Henderson reacted very sensitively to this remark. There could be no question whatever of such a will to war. He deplored certain Labour influences; he did not in any way defend the Anglo-Polish Agreement and said that no Runciman would be sent to Warsaw. Neither did he deny Polish unpredictableness or obstinacy. But, as usual, he ascribed the change of front in London to Germany's march into Rump Czechia.* In conclusion he reverted once again to the danger period of this summer.

* "Resttschechei" in the German original.

From here on, Henderson, obviously acting on instructions, spoke of London's willingness to negotiate with Berlin. Halifax obviously had in mind that the present state of tension could and must be ended by means of discussions. Neither England nor Germany could, or wanted to, bear the burden of rearmament any longer. The ending of the armaments race and the revival of economic relations could be the subject of discussions between London and Berlin. The colonial question could also be discussed. I made no comments on these remarks except to say that something similar had already been brought to my knowledge from London through different channels, but that I could not make anything of such unsubstantiated remarks.

It could be deduced from these conversational statements of Henderson's, that he is not happy about British relations with the Poles, that he thinks nothing of the Russian pact, and that, for the rest, he is deeply concerned about a possible conflict this summer, for he feels his responsibility as Ambassador in Berlin weighing heavily upon him.

Weizsäcker

From Documents on German Foreign Policy. 1918-1945, Series D, Vol. VI, pp. 718-719.

No. 327. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in France to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the USSR

June 14, 1939

Today Bonnet asked me to call on him and said that the instructions given to Strang were worked out after a protracted exchange of views between London and Paris and could be regarded as Anglo-French. The negotiations in Moscow, therefore, would be conducted by the English together with the French Ambassador. Bonnet discussed the instructions in a very vague way and in the most general terms. He said that in his opinion the one and only question still to be settled was the "Baltic" question and that he hoped that on this question, too, a formula satisfactory to both Sides would be found "round the table" in Moscow. He added that Strang's instructions in effect envisaged the guaranteeing of the Baltic countries "even without a request for assistance on their part". In his opinion, the question now was one of form rather than substance.

It is my feeling that Strang's main objection will be the enumeration in Article 1 of the countries to be guaranteed (the mention of the Baltic countries) and that a compromise will be sought by way of introducing the concept of "indirect aggression" and clarifying what each contracting party means by it.

As far as I know, Daladier and Léger have all along been in favour of such a solution of the question. According to their thinking, each Side should indicate in a separate protocol the countries a violation of whose neutrality would be regarded by it as an aggression directed against it as well, and would thus call into operation the undertakings contained in Article 1.

Ambassador

From the archives.

No. 328. Excerpt from the Diary of the Italian Foreign Minister

June 14, 1939

[...] The Duce desires that we begin to define with Spain the future program for the western Mediterranean: Morocco would go completely to Spain; Tunisia and Algeria would go to us. An agreement with Spain should insure our permanent outlet to the Atlantic Ocean through Morocco. [...]

From *The Ciano Diaries*, p. 99.

No. 329. Documents Handed by the Ambassadors of Great Britain and France in the USSR to the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR

June 15, 1939

BRITISH DRAFT

Article I

The United Kingdom, France and the USSR undertake to give to each other immediately all the support and assistance in their power should one of these countries become involved in hostilities with a European Power as a result either of

(1) aggression by that Power against any one of these three countries,

(2) aggression by that Power against another European State which the contracting country concerned had, in conformity with the wishes of that State, undertaken to assist against such aggression,

(3) action by that Power which the three contracting Governments, as a result of the consultation between them provided for in paragraph 3, considered to threaten the independence or neutrality of another European State in such a way as to constitute a menace to the security of the contracting country concerned.

Such support and assistance will be given in conformity with the principles of Article 16, paragraphs 1 and 2, of the Covenant of the League of Nations, but without its being necessary to await action by the League.

BRITISH DRAFT

Article III

Without prejudice to the immediate rendering of assistance on the outbreak of hostilities in accordance with paragraph 1,* in the event of circumstances arising which threaten to call into operation the undertakings of mutual assistance contained in paragraph 1,* the three contracting Governments will, on the request of any one of them, immediately consult together to examine the situation. Should the necessity arise, they will decide by common agreement the moment at which the mechanism of mutual assistance shall be put into operation and the manner of its application.

Published in *Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939*, Third Series, Vol. VI, London, 1953, p. 39.

No. 330. Aide-Mémoire Handed by the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR to the Ambassadors of Britain and France in the USSR

June 16, 1939

Having studied the Anglo-French formulas handed to Molotov on June 15** the Government of the Soviet Union has come to the following conclusion:

* The reference is to Article I.

** See Document No. 329.

1. As regards paragraph 1 of Article I (Soviet Government draft*) the position of the Soviet Government coincides with that of the British and French Governments.

2. As regards paragraph 2 of Article I (Soviet Government draft) the position of the Soviet Government is rejected by the British and French Governments.

The latter consider that the Soviet Union should render immediate assistance to Poland, Rumania, Belgium, Greece and Turkey in the event of an attack on them by an aggressor and in the event of England and France being involved in hostilities in connection therewith, whereas England and France would not assume obligations to render immediate assistance to the Soviet Union in the event of the USSR being involved in hostilities with an aggressor in connection with an attack by the latter on Latvia, Estonia and Finland which border on the USSR.

The Soviet Government cannot possibly agree to this inasmuch as it cannot accept the humiliating position of inequality in which the Soviet Union would thereby be placed.

In their proposals Britain and France justify their refusal to guarantee Estonia, Latvia and Finland by the unwillingness of these countries to accept such a guarantee. If that argument presents an insurmountable obstacle, and since the Soviet Government, as said above, finds it impossible to take part in rendering joint assistance to Poland, Rumania, Belgium, Greece and Turkey without being assured of equivalent assistance in the defence of Estonia, Latvia and Finland against an aggressor, the Soviet Government is forced to conclude that the whole question of a triple guarantee to all the eight States enumerated above, as well as the question which is the subject of paragraph 3 of Article I, will have to be put aside as not being ripe for solution and that paragraphs 2 and 3 of Article I will have to be excluded from the agreement.¹²⁴

In this event Article I would only consist of paragraph 1, and the obligations of England, France and the USSR as regards mutual assistance would enter into force only in the case of a direct attack by an aggressor on the territory of either one of the Contracting Parties, but they would not extend to cases in which one of the Contracting Parties might be involved in hostilities as the result of rendering assistance to any third State which is not a party to the present agreement but which is the object of an attack by an aggressor. In this connection the wording of paragraph 1 of Article I would clearly have to be changed accordingly.

3. In view of the differences of opinion further discussion is necessary on the question of the simultaneous entry into force of a general agreement and a military agreement.

4. As regards the question of not concluding an armistice or peace except by general agreement, the Soviet Government maintains its position, for it cannot accept the idea that any of the

* See Document No. 315.

Contracting Parties should have the right, at the height of defensive military operations against an aggressor, to conclude a separate agreement with the aggressor behind the back of and against its allies.

5. The Soviet Government considers the reference to Article 16, paragraphs 1 and 2, of the Covenant of the League of Nations to be superfluous.

From the archives.

No. 331. Telegram from the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR to the Soviet Ambassadors in Britain and France

June 16, 1939

The Anglo-French proposal received yesterday* is basically a repetition of the preceding proposal. In particular, we are asked to render immediate assistance to the five countries but they are refusing to render immediate assistance to the three Baltic countries in view of the latter's alleged rejection of such assistance. This means that the French and the English are putting the USSR in a humiliating and unequal position, something which under no circumstances would we accept.

Today I again called in Seeds, Naggiar and Strang and handed them our reply.** It says that since England and France do not agree to our proposal for guaranteeing Estonia, Latvia and Finland, the USSR cannot participate in guaranteeing the five countries and that we are therefore proposing that the entire question of a triple guarantee to the eight countries be dropped and regarded as not being ripe for solution.

In this case Article 1 of the Treaty would contain mutual assistance obligations by England, France and the USSR but such obligations would become operative only in the event of a direct attack by an aggressor on the territory of either one of the three contracting parties but they would not extend to cases where one of the contracting parties is involved in hostilities as a result of rendering assistance to any third state which is not a party to the present agreement but which is the object of an attack by an aggressor.

* See Document No. 329.

** See Document No. 330.

We feel that the English and the French want to conclude a treaty with us which would be advantageous to them and disadvantageous to us, that is, they do not want a serious treaty based on the principle of reciprocity and equality of obligations.

It is clear that we shall not accept such a treaty.

People's Commissar

From the archives.

No. 332. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in France to the
People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the USSR

June 19, 1939

At numerous receptions lately I have seen a great many different people, including many prominent military men. It is my impression that no one here even considers it possible that the talks with us might break down and fail to result in an agreement. Never before have I noticed such a universal recognition of our strength, such an upsurge of our prestige, coupled with an awareness "that without the USSR nothing will be achieved." Everyone is perplexed over the delay in the conclusion of the "agreement that is so necessary for everyone", and it is significant that the blame for this is no longer being laid on us. The English are being blamed most of all. At best this is being attributed to their "conservatism" and "dilatoriness" (Sarraut, Reynaud, Pertinax), but there are also some direct charges of "double-dealing" (Sellier and Violet). There has been a fundamental reappraisal of our position in respect of the Baltic area. Whether this is due to the influence of our newspaper articles or to the position of the Baltic countries themselves, it is a fact that almost everyone (especially the military men, for instance, General Giraud and Billotte) is saying that our demands are logical and reasonable. Even those who have not read our articles are repeating our arguments; in other words, one may conclude that a breakdown of the agreement would be regarded here as a disaster and that the Government would in that case find it difficult to justify its position.

Your latest reply to Strang is logical and irreproachable from the standpoint of equality and reciprocity.* We are saying: "If you

* See Documents Nos. 330 and 331.

do not want guarantees for the Baltic, then let us not speak about third countries at all, let us confine ourselves to cases directly affecting us." ¹²⁴ This is simple and logical but of course, it will not at all be to the liking of the English and French.

Ambassador

From the archives.

No. 333. Memorandum of a Conversation Between a German Journalist and a Counsellor in the Office of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany

June 19, 1939

The other day I spoke with Dr. Kleist from Ribbentrop's office. This is what Kleist said:

The information I gave you last May regarding the German-Polish conflict and the solution of the Polish question which Berlin was seeking* remains correct and valid to this day. Hitler is fully determined to ensure Germany's military security in the East in the course of this year by eliminating the Polish state in its present territorial and political form. In a conversation with Ribbentrop Hitler said that the Polish question must be solved for the following three reasons:

1. that present-day Poland is threatening Germany's freedom of political and military manoeuvre;
2. that capitulation of the Reich to Poland with the ensuing colossal loss of its prestige is inconceivable;
3. that a German concession to Poland would lead to insuperable difficulties for German policy in the East.

On another occasion Hitler said that he would be counting on a peaceful solution of the Polish problem to the very last but that simultaneously he would give orders to have everything ready for a swift and successful military action against Poland. If matters reached the point of an armed struggle between Germany and Poland, the German Army would act ruthlessly and without mercy. Throughout the world, Hitler went on to say, the Germans were known as Huns, but what would ensue in the event of a war with Poland would surpass all the deeds of the Huns. This ruthlessness in German military actions was necessary in order to show the states of the East and Southeast, by the example of the destruction of Poland, what it meant, in present-day conditions, to resist the German will and to provoke Germany into war.

* See Document No. 266.

In the last few weeks Hitler has been preoccupied with the Soviet Union and he has told Ribbentrop that after the solution of the Polish question it would be necessary to stage a new Rapallo phase¹⁰⁷ in German-Russian relations and that it would be necessary for a certain period of time to pursue a policy of equilibrium and economic co-operation with respect to Moscow.

German military action against Poland has been scheduled for late August or early September. War preparations in East Prussia have almost been completed and they are continuing in Germany and in Slovakia. In general terms the military action against Poland will start off with massive strikes delivered from all sides. In the first days of the war such crushing blows will be struck at Poland that Polish resistance will be broken within the shortest period of time and the conflict will be resolved in a local war before the English and French will have time to come to their senses. Unfortunately we shall have to accept big losses among the Germans living in Poland. Hitler said recently that he would order a hundred Poles to be shot for every German killed. So if the Poles should start slaughtering Germans they would be subjected to ruthless reprisals.

Another period of German-Polish negotiations may well precede the military conflict. Of late the Poles have repeatedly intimated to us that they are willing to begin negotiations with us on certain questions. Only a few days ago, when the Poles learned that I was leaving for the Baltic area and would make a short stopover in Warsaw (Kleist had been charged with preparations for the setting up in Riga and Tallinn of a German-Latvian and a German-Estonian Society), they asked me to pay a visit to the *Chef de cabinet* of the Polish Foreign Ministry, Count Lubienski. It is true that Ribbentrop declined this offer of contact but he gave instructions to respond to similar Polish requests on occasions that are favourable for us. In the course of possible German-Polish negotiations the question of Danzig might, for instance, be touched upon, and the Poles could be provoked into making far-reaching statements that could be interpreted as capitulation, and then, should we feel the time to be right for starting military action, the negotiations could be broken off and the entire world, and particularly the Polish people, could be told how far the Polish participants in the negotiations had gone in their capitulation. Such discrediting of the Pilsudskiite regime before the Polish public would be an excellent domestic political diversionary act which might result in the overthrow of the Polish Government and in internal disorders in Poland, thereby increasing the effect of the strike by the German armed forces which would be delivered at the same time. This plan was recently outlined to me by Ribbentrop, and I felt that it was quite feasible.

The propaganda action against Poland will begin on a large scale in three weeks or so. Anti-Polish radio broadcasts will be conducted in Polish, Ukrainian, Byelorussian, Kashub, Slenzanski and

other languages. Furthermore, a press bulletin will be issued in Berlin in English, French, Spanish and several Scandinavian languages, which will feature anti-Polish articles and reports. Also, at the present time authoritative Berlin agencies are defining the new German-Polish frontier. By and large, the plan for the new frontier envisages the following: the attachment of the Suwalki district to East Prussia; the attachment of the Corridor and Danzig to the Reich; the establishment of a border, running from Torun in the direction of Poznan, which is to remain outside the limits of the Reich; from Poznan the new frontier is to coincide with the old imperial frontier, with Lodz remaining outside the limits of the old imperial frontier; Polish Upper Silesia is to be returned to the Reich, with the new frontier overlapping the old one and embracing the entire Polish Upper Silesian industrial complex; the area of Teschen and Bielitz is also to be included within the new imperial boundaries. This plan for the delineation of the frontier in a "Godesberg situation"⁷⁷ will, if matters reach that point, be submitted to an international forum. Whether we shall observe that frontier after the solution of the Polish question is another matter.

From the archives.

No. 334. Contract for the Delivery of Special Equipment by the Soviet Union to China

June 20, 1939

In accordance with Articles 3 and 4 of the "Treaty between the Governments of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the Chinese Republic" of March 1, 1938, the Plenipotentiary Representatives of the aforesaid Governments have concluded the present Contract relating to the delivery to China of special equipment on account of the balance of 21,841,349 US dollars, on the following terms:

1. In keeping with the order placed by the Government of the Chinese Republic the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics will, between June 25, 1939, and September 1, 1939, deliver to China the special equipment listed in the enclosed inventory¹²⁵ to a total sum of 21,841,349 US dollars convertible into gold according to the exchange rate as of June 20, 1939.

2. Upon acceptance of the special equipment listed in the enclosed inventory by representatives of the Chinese Side the Plenipotentiary Representative of the Government of the Chinese Republic will confirm, by a relevant inscription in the inventory, the acceptance of the special equipment and certify the correctness of the calculation of payments for this equipment.

3. Within ten days of the date of the signing of the inventory appended to the present Contract the Plenipotentiary Representative of the Government of the Chinese Republic will present to the Plenipotentiary Representative of the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics a "Payments Obligation of the Government of the Chinese Republic" for the total sum due on the deliveries.

4. The present Contract has been drawn up in the Russian language, in two copies: one for the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the other for the Chinese Republic.

In witness of the correctness of the obligations undertaken by the two Sides the Plenipotentiary Representatives have signed the present Contract.

Plenipotentiary Representative
of the Government of the Union
of Soviet Socialist Republics
A. Mikoyan

Plenipotentiary Representative
of the Government of the
Chinese Republic
Yang Tse

From the archives.

No. 335. Contract for the Delivery of Special Equipment by the Soviet Union to China

June 20, 1939

In accordance with Articles 3 and 4 of the "Treaty between the Governments of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the Chinese Republic" of June 13, 1939,¹²⁶ the Plenipotentiaries of the aforesaid Governments have concluded the present Contract relating to the delivery to China of special equipment on account of the aforesaid Treaty, on the following terms:

1. In keeping with the order placed by the Government of the Chinese Republic the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics will, between June 25, 1939, and September 1, 1939, deliver to China the special equipment listed in the enclosed inventory to a total sum of 14,557,564 US dollars convertible into gold according to the exchange rate as of June 20, 1939.

2. Upon acceptance of the special equipment listed in the enclosed inventory by representatives of the Chinese Side the Plenipotentiary Representative of the Government of the Chinese Republic will confirm, by a relevant inscription in the inventory, the acceptance of the special equipment and certify the correctness of the calculation of payments for this equipment.

3. Within ten days of the date of the signing of the inventory appended to the present Contract the Plenipotentiary Representative of the Government of the Chinese Republic will present to the Plenipotentiary Representative of the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics a "Payments Obligation of the Government of the Chinese Republic" for the total sum due on the deliveries.

4. The present Contract has been drawn up in the Russian language, in two copies: one for the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the other for the Chinese Republic.

In witness of the correctness of the obligations undertaken by the two Sides the Plenipotentiary Representatives have signed the present Contract.

Plenipotentiary Representative
of the Government of the Union
of Soviet Socialist Republics
A. Mikoyan

Plenipotentiary Representative
of the Government of the
Chinese Republic
Yang Tse

From the archives.

No. 336. TASS Communique

June 21, 1939

A report appeared yesterday in some German newspapers saying that the Soviet Government was insisting in the course of the negotiations with England and France on its Far Eastern borders being guaranteed and that this was an obstacle to the conclusion of an agreement. TASS is authorized to state that this report is devoid of any foundation and is a fabrication.

From *Pravda*, No. 170 (7855),
June 21, 1939.

No. 337. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in Estonia to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the USSR

June 21, 1939

Information has been received that the other day most of the troops of the Estonian regular army were moved to the Estonian-

Soviet frontier, mainly to the Narva region. I shall ascertain the exact number of troops moved very shortly.

On June 26 Chief of Staff Halder will arrive in Tallinn from Berlin to inspect Estonian military units. From Estonia Halder will go on to Finland. A lavish reception is being prepared for him there.

Ambassador

From the archives

No. 338. Draft of Article I of the Treaty of Mutual Assistance Between Great Britain, France and the USSR Handed by the Ambassadors of Britain and France in the USSR to the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR

June 21, 1939

The United Kingdom, France and the USSR undertake to give to each other immediately all the support and assistance in their power should one of these countries become involved in hostilities with a European Power as a result either of:

(1) aggression by that Power against any one of these three countries, or aggression by it which, being directed against another European State, thereby constituted a menace to the security of one of these three countries, or

(2) aggression by that Power against another European State which the contracting country concerned had, with the approval of that State, undertaken to assist against such aggression.¹²⁷

Such support and assistance will be given in conformity with the principles of the League of Nations, but without its being necessary to await action by the League.

From *Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939*, Third Series, Vol. VI, London, 1953, pp. 92-93.

No. 339. Aide-Mémoire Handed by the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR to the Ambassadors of Britain and France in the USSR

June 22, 1939

The Soviet Government has carefully studied the proposal of England and France handed to V. Molotov on June 21*. In view of

* See Document No. 338.

the fact that this proposal is a repetition of the previous proposal made by England and France, which has met with serious objections on the part of the Soviet Government, the Soviet Government has decided that this proposal must be rejected as unacceptable.

From the archives.

No. 340. Telegram from the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR to the Soviet Ambassadors in Britain and France

June 23, 1939

The Anglo-French proposal handed to us on June 21* was accompanied by an explanation to the effect that it was based on "the fullest possible equality for the three contracting parties." But in reality it is something quite different. In this "new" proposal England and France, as hitherto, avoid the question of rendering immediate tripartite assistance to the three Baltic countries against an aggressor, while undertaking to provide for immediate tripartite assistance to the five countries. To these five countries the "new" Anglo-French proposal adds another two, Switzerland and Holland, to which the USSR is also supposed to undertake to render assistance together with England and France, though everyone knows that the USSR does not even have diplomatic relations with Switzerland and Holland. In view of this situation we have given a brief reply pointing out that the latest Anglo-French proposal is a repetition of the previous proposal made by England and France to which the Soviet Government has already made serious objections, and therefore, this proposal is rejected as unacceptable.

People's Commissar

From the archives.

No. 341. Letter from the US Chargé d'Affaires in France to the US Secretary of State

June 24, 1939

Sir: I have the impression that a second Munich, this time at the expense of Poland, may be in the making. The position of Daladier and the official position of the French Government remain,

* See Document No. 338.

of course, that France will support Poland if the latter resists aggression against Polish vital interests. It is, furthermore, possible that Germany will try to settle the Danzig question with such a heavy hand as to leave no way open for the French and British to attempt further "appeasement". Nevertheless my impression grows that many of the influences which were at work in France and England last September are coming to life again, and have determined that a trial of strength with Germany must again be avoided, and that if necessary Danzig must go the way the Sudetenland went.

Among the factors which contribute to the foregoing impression are:

(1) The appearance of a sense of weariness over the continued tension in Europe. This comes out at times in conversation with French people. Recently inquiries were made of Daladier by members of parliament, who had received complaints from constituents, as to how much longer reservists who had been called to the colors would be kept on active duty. Daladier has announced that he intends to liberate by September 1st the reservists serving in the Maginot Line, and by October 1st other reservists, adding that if the situation permitted he might advance these dates.

(2) One hears it said at times by French people that France must not allow itself to be dragged into war over Danzig. Such opinions were not expressed a few weeks ago. There is criticism that Poland intends to force France into war.

(3) A feeling, probably widespread, that after all the present set-up of Danzig and the Corridor is unsound and not worth a war in order to perpetuate it.

(4) A deep-seated dislike and distrust of Beck in French governmental circles.

(5) Failure of the British and French Governments, after weeks of discussion, to give any effective financial assistance or to furnish arms to Poland. Failure of the British and French Governments to conclude the definitive political accords with Poland.

(6) The possibility that the Anglo-French negotiations with the Soviet Union will fail. Failure to reach agreement with the Soviet Union would give a further argument to the "appeasers", namely, that France and Britain cannot go to war for Poland unless the Soviet Union comes in.

(7) Impossibility, in the case of war, of rendering effective military assistance to Poland. France would be obliged alone to attempt to break through the Siegfried Line. It is doubtful whether the British could get ships into the Baltic. Of course, in the long run France and Britain would win—but would it be worth it? (One hears such statements).

(8) Concern in France over the role which Spain might play in case of a general war.

(9) The terrible cost of continuing rearmament and the burden of financing the rearmament of Poland, Rumania, Turkey, Greece, etc.

(10) Demoralizing effect of developments in the Far East: weakening of British prestige; realization that if war breaks out France's Far Eastern Empire would, for the time being at least, be lost. If British fears over the Far East should limit British assistance to Poland in case of war to economic measures, such as an attempted blockade of Germany, that would strengthen the "appeasers" in France.

(11) Persistence of the feeling in influential circles that after all France should abandon central and eastern Europe to Germany, trusting that eventually Germany will come into conflict with the Soviet Union, and that France can remain secure behind the Maginot Line. This feeling went under cover on March 15th last. It continues to exist, however.

Edwin C. Wilson

From Foreign Relations of the United States, Diplomatic Papers, 1939, Vol. I, Washington, 1956, pp. 193-194.

No. 342. Telegram from a Soviet Military Intelligence Officer in Japan to the General Staff of the Red Army

June 24, 1939

Negotiations for a military pact⁵³ between Germany, Italy and Japan are continuing. According to German Ambassador Ott and Assistant Military Attaché Scholl, the latest Japanese proposals contain the following points:

1. In the event of war between Germany and the USSR, Japan will automatically join in the war against the USSR.

2. In the event of Italy and Germany being at war with England, France and the USSR, Japan will likewise automatically join Germany and Italy.

3. In the event that Germany and Italy should start a war against France and England only (with the Soviet Union remaining

uninvolved in the war) Japan will continue to regard herself as an ally of Germany and Italy but whether she will begin military action against England and France will depend entirely on the general situation. But if the interests of the tripartite alliance should require it, Japan will join in the war immediately.

This last reservation was made owing to the position of the USSR, which will probably be involved in a European war, and also to the unclear position of the USA. Japan's active military operations will be limited: in the second and third cases Japan will not advance beyond Singapore. Under the first point, all Japanese forces will be thrown against the USSR.

Ramzai

From the archives.

No. 343. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in Britain to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the USSR

June 24, 1939

The English Government is increasingly taking an attitude of capitulation with regard to the events in Tientsin.¹²⁸ All talk of reprisals against the Japanese has ceased. Chinese Ambassador Quo Tai-chi has told me that in a conversation with him three days ago Halifax clearly intimated that the British Government was prepared to withdraw its demand for a "neutral commission" and, without standing on any ceremony, to hand the four Chinese over to the Japanese, if this would eliminate the Tientsin "incident". As for Chamberlain, he told Greenwood (Deputy Leader of the Parliamentary Labour Party group) that the English authorities in Tientsin had acted rashly, that they had all too hastily come out in defence of the four Chinese, and that those four Chinese were men of "doubtful reputation", and so forth. Unless any new events occur to compel the British Government to take more vigorous action, there is every reason to believe that the lifting of the Tientsin blockade will follow the Munich pattern.

Ambassador

From the archives.

No. 344. Memorandum of a Conversation Between the Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR and the Czechoslovak Minister in the USSR *

June 25, 1939

[...] When I asked how the political circles with whom Fierlinger had been in contact abroad assessed the prospects of the English and French negotiations with the USSR, Fierlinger replied that Benes, for instance, was suspicious of England's role. He was convinced that even if England were to sign a political agreement with the USSR, on the very next day Chamberlain would resume his work of "peacemaker", i.e., conciliator and abettor of Germany. Chamberlain remained true to his Munich line and he would pursue it so long as he was in power. The idea of an English alliance with the USSR was being actively supported by the Labourites. In Fierlinger's opinion, their position was far better than the line taken by the French Socialist Party, or at least by the majority of the latter who followed the lead of Paul Faure. ** Léon Blum ***, with whom Fierlinger had met on several occasions, was well disposed. However, even he preferred that the USSR should not bring too much pressure to bear on France and England but content itself with the concessions already made by the two Governments in their negotiations for a political agreement. According to Fierlinger, a rather firm line was being taken by the Secretary-General of the General Confederation of Labour, Jouhaux. He told Fierlinger that France was approaching the point of a resumption of class battles, for unemployment was rising, and the proletariat was moving to the Left, while the Daladier-Bonnet Government was continuing its attempts to eliminate the socio-political gains of the Popular Front. Jouhaux was convinced that the Government would be overthrown in the forthcoming clashes with the organized forces of French democracy.

Fierlinger has seen Pertinax, Buret, Tabouis, **** and Comert. Pertinax has consistently and vigorously supported the idea of a tripartite agreement against the aggressor. Buret with all his temperament is taking the same line in *L'Ordre*. However, he told Fierlinger frankly that he did not quite understand the position of the USSR, and complained about his being inadequately informed as to the aims of Soviet foreign policy. Tabouis is strongly opposed to the policy of Bonnet and Daladier. Comert, who at present heads the

* Abridged.

** A leader of the Socialist Party.

*** Prime Minister of France (March-April, 1938), Chairman of the French Socialist Party.

**** French journalists.

Department of South American Countries, fully supports the idea of a peace front against aggressors.

When I asked what Odent, Avenol's former assistant in Geneva, was doing, Fierlinger told me that Odent now headed a small telegaph agency in Paris and was actively helping the Czech National Committee.

I asked Fierlinger about the situation at the "Skoda" Works in Czechoslovakia. Fierlinger replied that after Schneyder left the firm the Germans had taken over. However, Hromadka remained on the board of directors of the "Skoda" plants. Fierlinger was aware that the Gestapo was not hindering the "Skoda" plants from filling Soviet orders and that there even seemed to be prospects for placing more orders with those plants. The Germans were not objecting to Czechoslovak industry working as much as possible for export, as this would build up Germany's currency reserves.

Further on in the conversation Fierlinger noted the complex and double-faced policy of Poland in the present international situation. In the Minister's opinion it was not to be excluded, in the final analysis, that Poland and Germany might reach some kind of compromise. Beck will once again betray France and turn against the USSR. Even now he is encouraging the Baltic States to reject a pact of guarantees between the USSR, England and France.

In conclusion Fierlinger informed me that he had heard members of the French Embassy in Moscow express displeasure over the tactics of London which was stubbornly resisting the demand of the USSR to extend the guarantees to the Baltic States. Thus, the representative of Havas Agency, Champenois, has told Fierlinger that the Soviet Government is quite right in saying that the latest Anglo-French proposal contains nothing new and is merely a repetition of previous drafts which Seeds and Naggiar had presented to Comrade Molotov.

V. Potemkin

From the archives.

No. 345. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in France to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the USSR

June 25, 1939

Yesterday at a reception given by General Gamelin he asked me to tell you that according to information received from military agents, notably from the military agent in Berlin, extremist elements in Germany are urging Hitler to take immediate action against Po-

land. The military measures of the last few days (manoeuvres along the Siegfried Line and concentrations of large forces in Slovakia and Danzig) lend weight and authenticity to this information. There is no doubt in General Gamelin's mind that the Japanese measures in the Far East have not coincided with Berlin's war preparations by chance. As a soldier, he did not interfere in our negotiations, but he could not help expressing his bewilderment at the slow progress made at the talks.

Ambassador

From the archives.

No. 346. TASS Communique

June 26, 1939

Since May 15 a number of foreign newspapers, basing themselves on erroneous reports put out by the headquarters of the Kwantung Army, have been publishing information about clashes between army units of the Mongolian People's Republic and Japano-Manchurian forces. Japanese newspapers are making false charges that these clashes were caused by a violation of the Manchurian frontier by Mongolian forces. At the same time, Japanese newspapers are loudly bragging of the "great" losses inflicted on the troops and air force of the Mongolian People's Republic.

On the basis of information received from the headquarters of the Mongolian-Soviet forces in the MPR, TASS is in a position to present verified information about the events on the Mongolian-Manchurian frontier.

In reality, the following events occurred on the Mongolian-Manchurian border in the vicinity of Lake Buir Nor.

On May 11 Mongolian frontier posts in the area of Nomon-Kan-Burd-Obo (southeast of Lake Buir Nor and 16-20 km east of the Khalkhin Gol river) were subjected to a surprise attack by Japano-Manchurian forces and compelled to withdraw westwards from the border to the river Khalkhin Gol. Starting from May 12 frontier clashes occurred in the area almost daily for a period of ten days, resulting in dead and wounded on both sides. On May 22 reinforced Japano-Manchurian forces which attempted to attack our units and advance into the territory of the MPR were thrown back behind the border and they sustained considerable losses. On May 28 and 29

Japano-Manchurian forces, heavily reinforced with fresh Japanese troops which had arrived from Hailar with tanks, armoured cars, artillery and large numbers of aircraft, again invaded the territory of the Mongolian People's Republic. The raiders were routed and dispersed by the troops of the Mongolian People's Republic. Leaving behind many dead and wounded and much abandoned armament, the Japano-Manchurian forces retreated to their own territory. In this battle the Japano-Manchurian forces lost over four hundred men.

The casualties sustained by the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Army in these battles were 40 dead and 70 wounded.

Among captured documents belonging to three routed Japanese headquarters, one of which was the headquarters of the detachment of Lieutenant-Colonel Adzuma, was the original copy of an order, dated May 21, issued by the Commander of the 23rd Japanese Division, Lieutenant-General Kamatsubara, from Hailar. In that order General Kamatsubara, among other things, tells his troops that "the Division's own units must alone destroy the troops of Outer Mongolia in the area of Khalkhin Gol."

Along with the fighting between ground forces, there have also been air clashes in the area. On May 28 a group of Japanese fighters and bombers violated the Mongolian border and unexpectedly attacked two field aerodromes of the Mongolian Army. Caught unawares, the Mongolian-Soviet fighters took off somewhat belatedly and this gave the enemy an advantage.

In this battle the Mongolian-Soviet side lost nine aircraft, and the Japanese lost three. The Japanese planes were finally forced to beat a hasty retreat to their own bases. On June 22 there occurred a new attack by the Japano-Manchurian air force, with 120 planes taking part. The Mongolian-Soviet air force went into battle with 95 aircraft. Shot down in this battle were 31 Japano-Manchurian aircraft and 12 Mongolian-Soviet aircraft. On June 24 the Japano-Manchurian air force launched another attack, this time with 60 aircraft. The Mongolian-Soviet air force went into battle also with 60 aircraft and shot down 25 Japano-Manchurian aircraft. In this battle, the Mongolian-Soviet air force lost only two aircraft.

On June 25 no incidents were recorded on the border between the MPR and Manchukuo.

Mongolian-Soviet forces are holding all points on the Mongolian-Manchurian frontier east of the Khalkhin Gol river. Throughout the period of clashes Mongolian-Soviet forces had not once violated the established border except in isolated cases where Mongolian-Soviet aircraft were compelled to fly across the border into Manchuria in pursuit of Japano-Manchurian planes.

No. 347. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in Britain to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the USSR

June 26, 1939

Beaverbrook, who until now had always held that rumours about an imminent war were unfounded, yesterday told me that he had changed his mind. On the basis of all the information he has at his disposal Beaverbrook has come to the conclusion that war is imminent and that it will probably begin this autumn. According to Beaverbrook, Germany is now making all the necessary preparations for war—preparations both of a material and moral-political nature. In August the mobilization of the German Army will be completed and the crisis will begin with Danzig. Ribbentrop, who is at the height of his influence, has finally convinced Hitler that England and France are incapable of waging a serious war and that nothing will come of the negotiations for a tripartite pact. According to Beaverbrook, the events in Tientsin¹²⁸ were engineered by the Germans who wanted to test England's readiness to resist. From this experiment Ribbentrop has drawn the conclusion that there is no such readiness and that therefore it is necessary to make hay while the sun shines. Incidentally, Ribbentrop has sent out to quite a few prominent Englishmen personal invitations to come to Germany and meet Hitler. Beaverbrook has received such an invitation too, but he is not going.

Everything that Beaverbrook says, as reported here, reflects the feeling which is at present dominant in England that a great European crisis may be expected in late summer or early autumn.

Ambassador

From the archives.

No. 348. Memorandum of a Conversation Between the State Secretary of the German Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the British Ambassador in Germany

June 27, 1939

After handing over the memorandum on the naval question¹²⁹ today, the British Ambassador brought the conversation gradually round to general policy again. One could sense that like the rest of the Diplomatic Corps here Henderson considers our relationship

with Poland to be very strained and is afraid of an impending crisis. However, Henderson expressed his anxiety more in the form of a search for starting points for new German-British discussions. He thought that if only certain encouraging remarks were exchanged between Berlin and London the door [for negotiations] would be opened more and more and finally a constructive exchange of views would come about. The Ambassador asked me again as he did a fortnight ago* whether the conclusion of the British talks in Moscow might not be beneficial for the initiation of German-British talks.

Using similar arguments to those used last time I told the Ambassador that the opposite was the case. British foreign policy would be completely incomprehensible to me unless I regarded it as emanating from domestic policy.

Henderson emphatically agreed with this and said he wished that the Labour Party were at the helm and not the Conservatives, for in reality Chamberlain was now obliged to pursue Labour's foreign policy and also to bear the odium for its setbacks. Henderson had an idea that the Führer would also touch on foreign policy at the launching of the ship on July 1.** He hopes that on this occasion the Führer will not be too violent against London. Henderson believed that the tone of Dr. Goebbels' latest speeches*** had to be interpreted as hardly being inspired by the Führer.

The Ambassador's efforts to keep contacts with us were unmistakable. Unlike last time, however, he did not mention economic questions, the pause in armaments, and colonial questions as subjects for discussion but kept to more general suggestions. As he left he offered his services for anything he could do towards a resumption of talks. He said it was absolutely wrong to believe that Chamberlain had left the path of peace.

Weizsäcker

From *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945*. Series D.
Vol. VI, pp. 797-798.

No. 349. TASS Communiqué

June 27, 1939

According to information received from the Headquarters of the Mongolian-Soviet forces in the MPR, on June 26 about 60 Japanese fighter planes violated the border in the area of Lake Buir Nor. Over

* See Document No. 326.

** The 10,000 ton cruiser *Lützow* at Bremen. Footnote by the editors of *Documents on German Foreign Policy*.

*** J. Goebbels, the German Minister for Propaganda.

the territory of the MPR, in the area of Mongolryba*, an air battle took place in which 50 Mongolian-Soviet aircraft were engaged.

It was a fierce battle which lasted for about 2 hours. It ended with the rout of the Japanese aircraft which fled from the battlefield pursued by Mongolian-Soviet fighter planes as far as the area of Ganchur.

Twenty-five Japanese fighters were destroyed in the battle. After the battle three Mongolian-Soviet fighters failed to return and a search for them is continuing.

From *Izvestia*, No. 147 (6917).
June 27, 1939.

No. 350. TASS Communique

June 28, 1939

According to information received from the Headquarters of the Mongolian-Soviet forces, on June 27 there was a new attack by Japano-Manchurian aircraft over the territory of the MPR in the area of Tamtsak-Bulak, which is 120 km. away from the frontier. About 80 Japano-Manchurian fighters and 30 bombers took part in the attack. As a result of the brief encounter 7 Japanese aircraft were shot down (including two bombers). Of the Mongolian-Soviet aircraft that took part in the battle six failed to return to their bases and a search for them is now under way. Two small houses in Bain-Tumen** were damaged by the bombing and five people were wounded.

From *Izvestia*, No. 148 (6918),
June 28, 1939.

No. 351. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in France to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the USSR

June 28, 1939

Everyone here is discussing the motives behind the latest Japanese provocations against Mongolia. It would seem to be against

* A joint-stock fishing company with a base on Lake Buir Nor.

** At present the town of Choibalsan.

the interests of Japan to become involved in a conflict with us at a time when she is in a state of conflict with the Western countries. However, some people in this country feel that the nature of those conflicts is the same, and the conflicts are prompted mainly by the course of the Japano-Chinese war, that is, by a desire to seal off all the supply routes leading to China.

Most people, however, are inclined to link Japan's actions against Mongolia with the tripartite agreement, and here some versions are being put forward:

1. After the Tientsin conflict¹²⁸ the Japanese feared that the agreement might be extended to the Far East as well. To influence our partners it was necessary to show that Japan's main enemy and the most likely direction of Japanese aggression was the USSR.

2. The initiation of hostilities against the USSR pursued the aim of scaring others away from an agreement with a country that was already in a "factual state of war" and whose strength would be dispersed and fettered to the Far Eastern front.

Ambassador

From the archives.

No. 352. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in Finland to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the USSR

June 28, 1939

The Chief of Staff of the German Army, General Halder, is arriving in Helsinki tomorrow, June 29. The visit of Halder and five German military officers to Vyborg and Perkejarvi (the central point of the fortifications being erected on the Karelian Isthmus) and then to Kemi and Rovaniemi (the point from which the extension of the railway between Kemi and Rovaniemi is to be built in the future so as to connect Kemi and Petsamo) shows fairly clearly the purpose of this visit.

The Defence Ministry announced today that the differences in opinions between the Government and Mannerheim* on the question of defence have now been cleared up and removed.

Ambassador

From the archives.

* Field Marshal, Chairman of the National Security Council of Finland.

No. 353. Letter from the State Secretary of the German Ministry for Foreign Affairs to the German Ambassador in Britain

June 28, 1939

Many thanks for your letter of the 27th instant¹³⁰. The inclination of British circles to enter into discussions with us on outstanding questions is occasionally also shown here by Henderson. I take it that you also have by you the memoranda on our conversations here with Henderson. However, the concrete suggestions which Henderson advances can still hardly be regarded as constructive.

Weizsäcker

From *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945*, Series D, Vol. VI, p. 802.

No. 354. The Japanese Provocation Is Continuing (TASS Communique)

June 29, 1939

On June 28, 15 Japano-Manchurian bombers escorted by fighters again violated the frontier of the MPR in the area of Lake Buir Nor. They were met by anti-aircraft artillery fire and Mongolian-Soviet fighters. The Japano-Manchurian bombers dropped several untargeted bombs and withdrew to the territory of Manchuria without putting up a fight. Two Japano-Manchurian planes were shot down by anti-aircraft artillery fire and fell on the territory of the MPR.

From *Izvestia*, No. 149 (6919), June 29, 1939.

No. 355. An Article by A. Zhdanov "The English and French Governments Do Not Want an Equal Agreement with the USSR"

June 29, 1939

The Anglo-Franco-Soviet negotiations for the conclusion of an effective Pact of Mutual Assistance against aggression have reached an impasse. In spite of the fact that the Soviet Government has

made its position perfectly clear and exerted every effort towards reaching a speedy conclusion of a mutual assistance pact no real progress can be observed in the course of the negotiations. In the present international situation this cannot be a matter without grave consequences. It gives wings to the hopes of the aggressors and all enemies of peace—hopes for a possible breakdown of the talks for an agreement of the democratic states against aggression, and it drives the aggressors on to further acts of aggression.

The question arises in this connection: What has caused the impasse in these negotiations, whose successful outcome is impatiently and hopefully awaited by all peace-loving nations and all friends of peace?

I will venture to express my personal opinion on this subject although my friends do not agree with it. They still think that the English and French Governments began negotiations for a mutual assistance pact with the USSR with the serious intention of creating a powerful barrier against aggression in Europe. My opinion is, and I will try to prove it with facts, that the English and French Governments do not want an equal agreement with the USSR, that is, the only type of agreement that any self-respecting state could conclude, and I consider this to be the cause of the state of impasse the negotiations have now reached.

What are the facts?

The Anglo-Soviet negotiations if we count from April 15, i.e. the date on which we received the first English proposal, have been going on for seventy-five days. Of this number of days, the Soviet Government required only sixteen days for the preparation of its replies to the various English drafts and proposals; the remaining fifty-nine days were wasted in procrastination and delay on the part of the English and the French. Who, one may ask, is responsible for the slow progress of negotiations, if not the English and the French?

It is a matter of common knowledge from practical experience in the field of international agreements similar to the Anglo-Franco-Soviet one, that none other than England concluded pacts of mutual assistance with Turkey and Poland* within a very brief period; this only goes to show that when England *wished* to conclude the agreements with Turkey and Poland she found the means of ensuring the necessary tempo of the negotiations. The inadmissible delays and endless procrastination in the negotiations with the USSR warrant doubts as to the sincerity of the real intentions of England and France and make us wonder what actually is behind such a policy: Is it a serious endeavour to form a peace front? Or is it a desire to make use of the negotiations and of the delay attending them for some other purposes which have nothing in common with the creation of a front of peace-loving powers?

* See Documents Nos. 201, 213.

Such a question becomes all the more urgent owing to the position of the English and French Governments which have been piling up artificial difficulties in the course of the negotiations and creating the impression that serious differences of opinion existed between England and France, on the one hand, and the USSR, on the other, on such questions which, given good will and sincerity on the part of England and France, could have been settled without delay. A good example of this kind of artificial stumbling blocks in the negotiations is provided by the question of a triple guarantee of immediate assistance to Latvia, Estonia and Finland in the event of a violation of their neutrality by an aggressor. There is clearly no ground for saying that these Baltic States do not want such guarantees and that this is what prevents England and France from accepting the Soviet proposal. Such statements can only be prompted by one motive, namely the desire to complicate the negotiations and to frustrate them. In any case we all know of instances which prove that when, for instance, England considers it to be in her interest to guarantee this or that country, she finds ways and means of doing so without waiting for the countries concerned to ask for guarantees.

The English newspaper, *The Sunday Times*, says in its issue of June 4 that "should Great Britain be involved in hostilities as a result of an attack on Holland, Poland has agreed to come to her assistance", and that "on the other hand, if Poland is involved in hostilities as the result of an attack on Danzig or Lithuania, Great Britain has agreed that she will come to the assistance of Poland." Thus Poland and Great Britain simultaneously guarantee both Lithuania and Holland. I do not know whether Lithuania and Holland were asked about this bilateral guarantee. In any case nothing was said on the subject in the press. Moreover, both Holland and Lithuania, so far as I know, have denied the existence of such a guarantee. An agreement for the bilateral guarantee of these two countries has, however, been concluded in principle, according to *The Sunday Times*, and it is no secret to anybody that the statement in *The Sunday Times* has not been denied anywhere.

Not long ago the Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Beck, in an interview given to a French journalist, stated quite clearly that Poland had no demands or requests to make as regards any guarantees to her by the USSR and he also said that Poland was quite satisfied with the recently concluded trade agreement between herself and the Soviet Union. What difference is there between the position of Poland in the present case and that of the Government circles in the three Baltic States? Absolutely none. This, however, does not prevent England and France from asking the USSR to guarantee not only Poland and four other States (of whose wish as regards guarantees from the USSR we know nothing), but also Holland and Switzerland with whom the USSR does not even have diplomatic relations.

All this shows that the English and the French do not want a treaty with the USSR based on the principles of equality and reciprocity, despite their daily protestations of their desire for "equality". What they want is a treaty in which the USSR would play the part of a hired labourer bearing the brunt of the obligations on his shoulders. No self-respecting country will accept such a treaty unless it wants to be a plaything in the hands of people who are used to having others pull the chestnuts out of the fire for them. Still less can such a treaty be acceptable to the USSR whose strength, might and dignity are known to the whole world.

It seems to me that the English and the French do not want a real treaty, a treaty acceptable to the USSR. The only thing they really want is to talk about a treaty and, by spreading word about the alleged obstinacy of the Soviet Union, to prepare public opinion in their countries for an eventual deal with the aggressors.

The next few days will show whether this is the case or not.

Deputy of the Supreme Soviet
of the USSR
A. Zhdanov

From *Pravda*, No. 178 (7863),
June 29, 1939.

No. 356. Telegram from the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR to the Soviet Ambassador in France

June 30, 1939

The provocative Japano-Manchurian actions against Mongolia are, according to our information, an attempt to demonstrate Japan's military strength, and they were taken at the insistence of Germany and Italy. The aim of these Japanese actions was to prevent the conclusion of an Anglo-Franco-Soviet agreement by scaring England and France away from such an agreement. The obvious setback suffered by the Japanese in this venture is bound to have an effect contrary to what the Germans and Italians had expected.

People's Commissar

From the archives.

No. 357. Documents Handed by the Ambassadors of Britain and France in the USSR to the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR

July 1, 1939

DRAFT ARTICLE I

The United Kingdom, France and the USSR undertake to give to each other immediately all effective assistance should one of these countries become involved in hostilities with a European Power as a result of aggression by that Power against any one of these three countries, or aggression by that Power against another European State whose independence or neutrality the contracting country concerned felt obliged to defend against such aggression.

The assistance provided for in the present article will be given in conformity with the principles of the League of Nations, but without its being necessary to follow the procedure of, or to await action by, the League.

DRAFT OF UNPUBLISHED AGREEMENT

It is understood between the three Contracting Governments that Article I of the Treaty between them signed today will apply to the following European states:

Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Poland, Rumania, Turkey, Greece, Belgium, Luxemburg, the Netherlands and Switzerland.

The foregoing list of countries is subject to revision by agreement between the three Contracting Governments.

The present supplementary understanding* between the three Governments will not be made public.

From the archives.

No. 358. Memorandum of a Conversation Between the Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR and the Ambassador of France in the USSR

July 1, 1939

The French Embassy informed my secretariat over the telephone that Naggiar was asking for an appointment tonight at any time

* The word "supplementary" does not appear in the English text but is included in the French text.

after half past six. I enquired of the Ambassador over the telephone as to the purpose of his visit. Naggiar explained that he wanted personally to give me, for Comrade Molotov, a modified version of Article 3 of our draft of June 2.* We agreed that the Ambassador would come to the Commissariat at about seven o'clock.

Naggiar appeared somewhat later than the appointed hour explaining this by the need to agree the text he had brought with the English Embassy. In handing over the document, the Ambassador said that the consultations provided for in the new wording of Article 3 did not relate to the circumstances mentioned in Article 1 of the treaty, that is, to aggression against one of the contracting States or to a military conflict resulting from aggression by a European State against another State of Europe whose independence or neutrality any one of the contracting Powers considered it necessary to defend against an aggressor. The draft of Article 3, as was said, did not relate to cases of overt aggression, but only dealt with circumstances which threatened peace and which might lead to a military conflict in the future. As an illustration, Naggiar cited the possibility that in Switzerland, for example, power might be seized by a fascist party which would have close contact with Hitler's Germany and, under her direction, begin preparations for carrying out Germany's offensive plans against France. There would be no direct aggression yet, but France could call on the USSR and England to hold joint consultations so as to avert an attack by Germany. Naggiar recalled that our draft of June 2 had envisaged the need for consultations in such cases, and that neither the automatic rendering of mutual assistance under the circumstances indicated in Article 1 nor the taking of joint action by the three powers, which would be an act independent of the League of Nations procedure, would in any way be adversely affected by the presence of Article 3, which provided for consultations in case of a threat to universal peace.

I told the Ambassador that I would immediately transmit to Comrade Molotov the document he had handed to me.

In taking leave of me, Naggiar said he would like very much indeed to see the earliest possible completion of the negotiations and towards this end was prepared to co-operate in every way. So far the Ambassador had not requested a meeting with Comrade Molotov to exchange views on the negotiations now in progress. However, Naggiar wanted us to know that he was always ready to meet with the People's Commissar should Comrade Molotov consider this to be useful for the successful conduct of the negotiations.

V. Potemkin

* See Document No. 315.

**DRAFT OF AN ARTICLE ON THE QUESTION UNDER
CONSIDERATION IN ARTICLE 3 OF THE SOVIET DRAFT OF
JUNE 2**

Without prejudice to the immediate rendering of assistance on the outbreak of hostilities, in accordance with Article 1, in the event of circumstances arising which threaten to call into operation the undertakings of mutual assistance contained in Article 1, the three Contracting Governments will, at the request of any one of them, immediately consult together to examine the situation and to decide by common agreement the moment at which the mechanism of mutual assistance shall be put into immediate operation and the manner of its application, independently of any procedure of the League of Nations.

From the archives.

**No. 359. Telegram from the Ambassador of the USSR in the
USA to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs
of the USSR**

July 2, 1939

On June 30 I requested a meeting with the President in connection with my departure. On the same day I had a 40-minute conversation with Roosevelt.

The President gave a lengthy reply to my question whether there was anything he wished to communicate to the Soviet Government. His statement, of which I shall give a more detailed account in person, can be summarized as follows. The situation in Europe is extremely dangerous, and a new aggression is only weeks away. Further unpunished aggression poses a threat of economic, and following that, political enslavement of the whole of non-fascist Europe. The USSR will hardly reconcile itself to the enslavement of the Baltic countries and the USA cannot reconcile itself to the enslavement of England and France. He is doing everything possible, given the present composition of Congress, to promote the setting up of a democratic front, and he is arranging for assistance to victims of aggression. He understands why we mistrust the present governments of England and France. He himself does not trust the French, particularly Bonnet, but feels that England has had her path to further "appeasement" cut off. The chances of Poland fighting for Danzig are, in Roosevelt's opinion, "two to one" that Poland would resist. The English and the French can have no doubts as to his

(Roosevelt's) interest in the successful completion of the Moscow negotiations (I gave Roosevelt a detailed account of our position on the lines of Zhdanov's article *).

In reply to my question whether he anticipated the application of "appeasement" methods at the expense of China in connection with the Tientsin conflict,¹²⁸ Roosevelt said that he feared excessive concessions by the English, and anticipated similar events in Shanghai in the coming weeks, but that he had to take into account the fact that the English naval forces were tied up and he felt that "retaliation is inevitable, the English people are waking up". The Chinese are fighting well. American assistance, mainly financial, will be continued. For the time being, certain items of raw materials are being shipped from the USA to Japan, but the Japanese have less than a hundred million dollars of gold reserves left, and they will not be given credits.

As regards the events on the border of the MPR, the greatest air battle in history, he does not believe the Japanese version and thinks highly of our defence capacity. He asks that it be communicated to Stalin and Molotov that the other day he received a confidential letter from a highly influential Japanese who was a member of the Japanese Government four years ago and at present maintains close ties with some members of the Japanese Cabinet. This person offered him a plan of Japanese-American co-operation "in exploiting the wealth of Eastern Siberia almost as far as Baikal." "It is fantastic, but typical of the plans of certain Japanese 'activists' who, despite Japan's exhaustion, have not given up thoughts of adventures in your direction."

Ambassador

From the archives.

No. 360. Documents Handed by the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR to the Ambassadors of Britain and France in the USSR

July 3, 1939

DRAFT ARTICLE I

The United Kingdom, France and the USSR undertake to give to each other immediately all effective assistance should one of these three Powers become involved in hostilities with a European State as a result either of aggression by that State against any one of

* See Document No. 355.

these three Powers, or of aggression, direct or indirect, by that State against another European country whose independence or neutrality one of the three Powers concerned felt obliged to defend against such aggression.

The assistance provided for in the present article will be given in conformity with the principles of the League of Nations, but without its being necessary to follow the procedure of, or await action by, the League.

DRAFT ARTICLE III

Without prejudice to the immediate rendering of assistance in accordance with Article I and in the interests of securing its better preparation, the three Contracting Governments will exchange information periodically about the international situation and will lay down the lines of mutual diplomatic support in the interests of peace, and in the event of circumstances arising which threaten to call into operation the undertakings of mutual assistance contained in Article I, they will, at the request of any one of them, immediately consult together to examine the situation and to determine jointly the moment at which the mechanism of mutual assistance shall be put into immediate operation and the manner of its application independently of any procedure of the League of Nations.

DRAFT PROTOCOL

It is understood between the three Contracting Governments that Article 1 of the Treaty between them signed today will apply to the following European States in the event of either direct aggression or indirect aggression, under which latter term is to be understood an internal *coup d'état* or a reversal of policy in favour of the aggressor:

Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Poland, Rumania, Turkey, Greece and Belgium.

The foregoing list of countries is subject to revision by agreement between the three Contracting Governments.

The present supplementary agreement will not be made public.

From the archives.

No. 361. Telegram from the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR to the Soviet Ambassadors in Britain and France

July 3, 1939

Today I handed over our reply* to the latest Anglo-French proposals.** We are accepting the Anglo-French proposal to list the five countries and the three Baltic States only in a secret protocol, so that in the open treaty this subject should be mentioned in a general form and without indicating any specific countries. We have rejected the new Anglo-French proposal to offer guarantees to three additional countries—Switzerland, Holland and Luxemburg—since only eight, and not eleven, countries were considered both in the negotiations and in the resolution of the Supreme Soviet which approved the policy of the Soviet Government. We could agree to include in the protocol another two countries (Switzerland and Holland), but not three, and the two only on condition that Poland and Turkey conclude mutual assistance pacts with the USSR similar to the mutual assistance pacts which England and France have with Poland*** and Turkey. This would facilitate matters for us since Poland and Turkey would be assuming obligations of assistance in relation to the USSR. Without this we cannot assume any new obligations (over and above the said eight countries). Today's conversation concentrated on this question.

Furthermore, our amendments consisted in the following: the Anglo-Franco-Soviet Treaty should have in view not only direct but also indirect aggression. And further, in the Treaty, without prejudice to the rendering of immediate assistance, provision must be made for consultations between England and France and the USSR in cases which threaten to call into operation the undertakings of mutual assistance. Also, with a view to securing more effective preparation for the rendering of mutual assistance, the three Contracting Governments will exchange information periodically about the international situation and lay down the lines of mutual diplomatic support in the interests of peace.

People's Commissar

From the archives.

* See Document No. 360.

** See Document No. 358.

*** See Documents Nos. 201, 213.

No. 362. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in Estonia to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the USSR

July 5, 1939

On July 3 the shale mine in Kiviily, 30 km from Narva, was visited by Japanese General Kawabe of the Japanese Embassy in Berlin together with Colonel Okuchi of the Japanese Embassy in Riga. They later toured the fortified district of Narva.

On the same day Tagami and Katayama of the Japanese Embassy in Riga visited Narva, Tartu and Pacher as "tourists".

Ambassador

From the archives.

No. 363. Telegram from the US Ambassador in Belgium to the US Secretary of State

July 5, 1939

For the President and Secretary of State: Referring to your telegram of July 2, 2 p.m., the reaction to the vote of the House of Representatives on neutrality legislation among those who were informed here was one of thwarted hope, distress and deep disappointment. The Prime Minister stated that he was deeply disappointed ("je suis très déçu"). During the past 6 weeks many Belgians in official and other circles have of their own initiative inquired of me as to the prospects of the neutrality legislation and have manifested deep concern. Fear has been expressed to me that the action of Congress might be the decisive factor in the next move of the aggressors which is feared to be imminent and that it might be a contributing cause to possible speedy hostilities. There is much confusion as to just what the situation at home is but to a surprising degree in the cafes and on the streets here the action of Congress was followed and discussed with apprehension. The pathos of the situation here is intense. To my personal knowledge men and particularly women are in deadly fear of war and its horrors to them in a situation where they can do nothing to prevent it themselves.

Generally the feeling here is that in case of war the people do not expect America to join in the war with manpower but they pathetically have a conviction that the American people are fundamentally sympathetic with the attitude of European democracies

against aggression and for the settlement of issues by conference and a despairing hope that the American people will render all such assistance as may be possible in a material way short of sending American soldiers. Any action looking to the prevention of possible shipment of arms and munitions which is paid for and delivered in the United States causes intense disappointment. The reaction on the policy of the Belgian Government I think will not be appreciable. They are intent on preserving neutrality; but the failure to repeal the arms embargo will probably increase the hesitation of the Belgian Government to buy American material because of the uncertainty of being able to replace or service it in time of war.

The Government is desperately trying to prevent their country from again being the battlefield. The hope in my opinion will be impossible of realization. The European press of the totalitarian states is profuse in jubilation over this set-back to the democracies. I have no hesitation in expressing an opinion that the Congressional action gave aid and comfort to the aggressors and quite possibly may be a definite factor in the determination of their immediate plans.

Davies

From *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1939, Vol. I*, pp. 664-665.

No. 364. Japanese Provocateurs Are Not Calming Down (TASS Communiqué)

July 6, 1939

According to a report issued by the Headquarters of the Mongolian-Soviet forces in the MPR, by July 2 the Japano-Manchurians had concentrated sizable forces of infantry, cavalry, artillery and about 100 tanks in the area of Nomon-Kan-Burd-Obo, southeast of Lake Buir Nor. Supported by bomber and fighter planes, and again violating the border of the MPR, at dawn on July 3 Japano-Manchurian troops mounted an offensive from the area of Nomon-Kan-Burd-Obo and further north, as far as Lake Yanhu, attacking the positions of Mongolian-Soviet forces east of the Khalkhin Gol river and trying to break through in a westerly direction from that river. Taking part in the offensive was the entire 23rd Infantry Division under Kamatsubara supported by an infantry regiment, the 3rd and 4th Tank Regiments and up to 6 *bargut* cavalry regiments.

The Mongolian-Soviet forces repulsed all the attacks of the Japano-Manchurian forces in the area of Nomon-Kan-Burd-Obo and inflicted heavy losses upon them. To the north-west of this area

Japanese infantry supported by at least 60 tanks gained some ground from the cavalry units of the Mongolian-Soviet forces and crossed over to the western bank of the Khalkhin Gol river where they occupied a small bridgehead. As a result of a determined counter-attack by Mongolian-Soviet ground and air forces, by the end of July 5 the Japanese forces which had crossed over to the western bank of the Khalkhin Gol were thrown back to the east of the Khalkhin Gol river and they sustained heavy losses. During these days Mongolian-Soviet artillery shot up 50 Japanese tanks and damaged eight guns. Eight hundred Japano-Manchurian troops were killed. The losses of the Mongolian-Soviet forces were 100 men killed and 200 wounded, and 25 tanks and armoured cars damaged.

In the same period, between July 2 and 5, there occurred air battles involving large numbers of planes on both sides. In all these armed clashes the Mongolian-Soviet air force invariably came out on top. Between July 2 and 5 the Japanese lost 45 aircraft which had been shot down. The losses on the Mongolian-Soviet side were nine aircraft.

According to information from the Headquarters of the Mongolian-Soviet forces, the chief of the press office of the Kwantung Army, Kawahara, has been removed from his post for issuing false reports bragging about the imaginary successes of the Japanese air force, and replaced by Colonel Wato.

From *Izvestia*, No. 155 (6925),
July 6, 1939.

No. 365. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in France to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the USSR

July 7, 1939

Yesterday I had lunch with Mandel. He acknowledges that we have every right to mistrust the negotiators and to insist that every point be made clear and explicit. "It is better to lose a few weeks than to allow any vagueness or reservations." The experience of Czechoslovakia also fully justifies our demand that provision be made not only for cases of direct aggression but also for internal *putsches*. From the very outset he has been in favour of guaranteeing "all countries without exception" which might be subjected to aggression, and therefore he also supports our stand on the Baltic question.

Ambassador

From the archives.

No. 366. Draft Anglo-Franco-Soviet Agreement Handed by the Ambassadors of Great Britain and France in the USSR to the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR

July 8, 1939

DRAFT ANGLO-FRANCO-RUSSIAN AGREEMENT
(JULY 8, 1939) *

Alternative "A"

The Governments of the United Kingdom, France and the USSR, with the object of making more effective the principles of mutual assistance against aggression adopted by the League of Nations, have reached the following agreement:

Alternative "B"

The Governments of the United Kingdom, France and the USSR, considering that any action against the independence or neutrality of a European State affects the peace and security of Europe as a whole, being firmly attached to the respect and maintenance of such independence and neutrality and desirous of making more effective the principles of mutual assistance against aggression adopted by the League of Nations, have reached the following agreement:

Article 2 **

The three contracting Governments will concert together as soon as possible as to the methods, forms and extent of the assistance to be rendered by them in conformity with Article 1, with the object of making such assistance as effective as possible in case of need.

Article 3

The three contracting Governments will exchange information periodically about the international situation and will lay down the lines of mutual diplomatic support in the interests of peace. Without

* In the original texts this heading appears before each article of the draft agreement and before the draft protocol. To avoid repetition the heading is not repeated hereafter.

** Draft Article I will be found in Document No. 357.

prejudice to the immediate rendering of assistance in accordance with Article 1, and with a view to securing its more effective preparation, in the event of circumstances arising which threaten to call into operation the undertakings of mutual assistance contained in Article 1, the three contracting Governments will, on the request of any one of them, immediately consult together to examine the situation and (in case of necessity) to decide by common agreement the moment at which the mechanism of mutual assistance shall be put into immediate operation and the manner of its application (independently of any procedure of the League of Nations).

Article 4

The three contracting Governments will communicate to one another the terms of any undertakings of assistance which they have already given to other European States. Any of the three Governments which may in future be considering the giving of any fresh undertaking of the same character will consult the other two Governments before doing so, and will communicate to them the terms of any undertaking so given.

Article 5

In the event of joint operations against aggression being begun in accordance with Article 1, the three contracting Governments undertake only to conclude an armistice or peace by common agreement.

Article 6

With a view to ensuring the full efficacy of the present agreement, the agreement foreshadowed in Article 2 will be concluded within the shortest possible time, and negotiations for this purpose will open immediately after the signature of the present agreement.

Article 7

The present agreement will continue for a period of five years from today's date. Not less than six months before the expiry of the said period, the three contracting Governments will consult together as to the desirability of renewing it, with or without modification.

Protocol (Paragraph 1)

It is understood between the three contracting Governments that Article 1 of the agreement between them signed today will apply to the following European States, and that the word "aggression" is to be understood as covering action accepted by the State in question under threat of force by another Power and involving the abandonment by it of its independence or neutrality.

From the archives.

No. 367. Draft Supplementary Letter to the Agreement Between the USSR, Britain and France Handed by the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR to the Ambassadors of Britain and France in the USSR

July 9, 1939

The three contracting Governments have agreed as follows:

1. Article 1 of the Agreement signed by them today will apply to the following European States: Turkey, Greece, Rumania, Poland, Belgium, Estonia, Latvia, Finland, Switzerland and the Netherlands.

2. As regards the two last named States (Switzerland and the Netherlands) the Agreement will only enter into force if, and when, Poland and Turkey conclude pacts of mutual assistance with the USSR.

3. The expression "indirect aggression" covers action accepted by any of the above-mentioned States under threat of force by another Power, or without any such threat, involving the use of territory and forces of the State in question for purposes of aggression against that State or against one of the contracting parties, and consequently involving the loss by that State of its independence or the violation of its neutrality.

The foregoing list of States is subject to revision by agreement between the three contracting Governments.

The present supplementary Agreement will not be made public.

From the archives.

**No. 368. Telegram from the Ambassador of the USSR in Britain
to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of
the USSR**

July 12, 1939

In a conversation with me Polish Ambassador Raczynski assessed the chances of war and peace over Danzig as fifty-fifty. He assured me, however, that the predominant mood in Warsaw (he had just returned from the Polish capital) was one of calm determination and readiness to resist the aggressor. When I asked who was going to decide when and in what forms action would have to be taken against German aggression in Danzig, Raczynski replied somewhat differently than he did to the same question about a month ago. At that time Raczynski had said that Poland herself would decide, while England and France would automatically have to support Poland. Now Raczynski declared that very close relations had been established between Poland and England, that Warsaw was informing London in detail of all developments and that if any act of aggression should occur in respect of Danzig, Warsaw would undoubtedly make this known to London and ask for advice.

Generally speaking, it is now obvious to me that in the last week the British Government has succeeded in taking the Polish Government somewhat more in hand by, *inter alia*, exploiting the financial negotiations which Colonel Koc* is at present conducting in London. Among other things, Raczynski strongly emphasized that Poland would do her best to avoid any "provocative acts" in respect of Germany—and the way he put it would seem to indicate that such acts even include the sending of protest notes to the Danzig Senate or to the German Government.

Ambassador

From the archives.

**No. 369. Telegram from the Ambassador of the USSR in Estonia
to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of
the USSR**

July 13, 1939

A German cruiser has arrived in the Tallinn roadstead. The crew is in the city. Every night between midnight and 3 a.m. the Esto-

* Head of the Polish Economic mission to London in the summer of 1939.

nians are sending trainloads of military supplies and munitions to the Estonian-Soviet border.

Ambassador

From the archives.

**No. 370. Letter from the German Minister for Foreign Affairs
to the French Minister for Foreign Affairs**

July 13, 1939

Personal

On July 1 you handed to Count Welzeck a Note intended for me personally¹³¹, the contents of which now oblige me also to inform Your Excellency clearly and unmistakably of the German Government's position on German-French relations in general and on the Danzig question in particular.

On December 6, 1938, the German and French Governments signed a Declaration by which they solemnly recognized as final the existing frontiers between Germany and France, and by which they agreed to do all within their power to ensure peaceful and good-neighbourly relations between the two countries.* For the Reich Government this Declaration was the logical consequence of the policy of understanding with France, consistently followed by them since they came to power, and to which they still wish even today to adhere in principle.

As to your remark on the reservation embodied in Article 3 of the German-French Declaration, in respect of the special relations of Germany and France with third Powers, it is by no means correct that this reservation embraces a recognition of France's special relations with Poland. In the conversations which took place in Berlin and Paris during the preliminary negotiations on the Declaration and on the occasion of its signature, it was, on the contrary, completely clear that the reservation applied to the special relations of friendship between France and Britain, and between Germany and Italy. In particular we agreed in our discussions in Paris on December 6, 1938, that respect for the vital interests of either side constituted a prerequisite and principle for the future development of good German-French relations. On this occasion I expressly referred to Eastern Europe as being a German sphere of interest, and you—quite contrary to what you assert in your Note—emphasized on your side at the time that a fundamental change had come about in France's attitude to Eastern European questions since the Munich Conference.

* See Document No. 64.

It is in direct contradiction to this position established by us at the beginning of December, that France has made the Führer's generous proposal to Poland for a settlement of the Danzig question,¹⁰⁸ and Poland's somewhat peculiar reaction, the occasion for entering into new and deeper commitments to Poland against Germany. At the end of your Note, these commitments are defined to the effect that any military intervention by Poland in the event of a change in the *status quo* in Danzig would cause France to give Poland immediate military assistance. On this policy of the French Government I have the following comments to make:

1) Just as Germany has never interfered in France's spheres of vital interest, Germany must categorically and once and for all reject any interference by France in Germany's spheres of vital interest. Germany's relations with her Eastern neighbours, whatever form they may assume, do not affect any French interests, but are a matter exclusively concerning Germany's own policy. Accordingly, the Reich Government do not consider themselves in a position to discuss with the French Government questions of German-Polish relations, still less to admit France's right to exert any influence on questions connected with shaping the future destiny of the German city of Danzig.

2) For your personal information, however, about the German view in the Polish question I would like to state the following: The Polish Government have replied to the Führer's historic offer, made once and for all, for the settlement of the Danzig question and for the final consolidation of German-Polish relations with threats of war which can only be described as strange. For the moment it is impossible to tell whether the Polish Government will revise this peculiar attitude and return to reason. But as long as they persist in this unreasonable attitude, nothing can be said except that any violation of Danzig soil by Poland, or any provocation by Poland which is incompatible with the prestige of the German Reich, would be answered by an immediate German advance and the destruction of the Polish Army.

3) The statement, mentioned above, in the final sentence of your Note would, if taken literally, mean that France recognizes Poland's right to resist with military force any change whatever in the *status quo* in Danzig, and that, if Germany declines to tolerate such a violation of German interests, France will attack Germany. Should such really be the purpose of French policy, I must beg you to note that such threats would only strengthen the Führer still further in his resolve to safeguard German interests with all the means at his disposal. The Führer has always desired German-French understanding and has always described as madness another war between the two countries which are no longer separated by any conflicting vital interests. Should it, however, be that the French Government want war, then they will always find Germany ready. The responsibility for such a war would then have to be borne solely by the French Government before their people and before the world.

In view of the pleasant personal relations with Your Excellency which I was able to form on the occasion of the signature of the Declaration of December 6, 1938, I regret that your Note has constrained me to make this reply. I do not wish to abandon the hope that, in the end, reason may yet prevail and the French people recognize where their true interests lie. Since I have worked for over twenty years for a German-French understanding, this would also represent for me personally the fulfilment of a sincere desire.

Joachim von Ribbentrop

From *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945*, Series D, Vol. VI, pp. 918-920.

No. 371. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in France to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the USSR

July 14, 1939

A highly influential statesman has informed me that some "Munichmen" in the Cabinet have been resorting to various tricks and stratagems in order to prepare public opinion for the idea that nothing will come of an agreement with us and that it is therefore necessary to seek other ways to bring about the "appeasement of Europe." Besides the press, influential parliamentarians (Party leaders) and military men have also been given this treatment. The result is a failure. Gamelin refuses to be convinced that "Moscow does not want an agreement"; on the contrary, he discerns in Moscow's manner of negotiating, besides mistrust of the "Munichmen", evidence of a "serious approach to the matter." As regards Moscow's demands, he finds that most of them are reasonable and also meet the interests of France. Gamelin has strongly warned against a "curtailed" agreement between the three, pointing out that such an agreement would not be adequate in coping with the most vital tasks of the moment. The suggestion that one of the reasons for the Moscow delays was "a backward glance at Berlin" has also had a reverse effect and has served as an additional argument in favour of the speediest possible conclusion of a treaty with Moscow (this, incidentally, was how the Right-winger, Marin, reacted). According to my informant, Chamberlain's associates have come to the same sad conclusions. It will hardly prove possible to shift all the blame on to Moscow, and it is yet to be seen whether Chamberlain himself would come out unscathed should the negotiations fail to lead to

an agreement. My informant is therefore convinced that "the effective treaty Moscow is striving for will be concluded."

Ambassador

From the archives.

No. 372. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in Britain to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the USSR

July 14, 1939

Today I lunched with Lloyd George who expressed grave concern over the course and future prospects of the Anglo-Soviet negotiations. He said that the Chamberlain clique, still unable to accept the idea of a pact with the USSR against Germany, was now attempting a manoeuvre roughly along the following lines. On the one hand, the British Government was putting pressure on Poland through political, military and economic channels, recommending "moderation" over Danzig. On the other hand, by mobilizing the navy, putting on a show of air power in France* (and probably also in Poland), emphasizing the strength of the Anglo-French alliance, publicizing the "firm" speeches made by British Ministers, etc., the British Government hopes "to give Germany a bit of a fright" and thus to restrain her from expanding the conflict over Danzig into an all-out war. If this manoeuvre is successful and German aggression either stops altogether for a time or is turned in a direction that does not involve the need for England to fulfil her obligations to European states, the urgency of concluding a pact with the USSR will diminish and Chamberlain will have an opportunity to try once more to reach an agreement with the aggressors, or at least to delay for a long time the signing of a treaty with the Soviet Government. The fact that on August 4 Parliament will rise for the holidays until October has an important part to play, in the Prime Minister's reckoning. With Parliament adjourned, the British Government has greater freedom of action. During the recess, when pressure from the Opposition of all shades will naturally slacken, it will be easier for Chamberlain either to break off the Anglo-Soviet negotiations altogether, or at least to freeze them for an extended period, putting the blame for this (in the eyes of British public opinion) on the USSR. Whether or not the Premier can carry out this plan is another question, for this will depend on a great many fac-

* A reference to flights of RAF planes to France.

tors over which the Prime Minister has no control. However, Lloyd George believes it necessary to warn us that such is the plan.

Ambassador

From the archives.

No. 373. Telegram from the Ambassador of the USSR in Estonia to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the USSR

July 14, 1939

According to information received, the German cruiser may remain in Tallinn for a longer period. At present German officers are engaged in inspecting fortifications on the Islands of Aegna and Naissaar, which are situated opposite the Bay of Tallinn.

Ambassador

From the archives.

No. 374. The Japano-Manchurian Provocation Is Continuing (TASS Announcement)

July 14, 1939

According to a dispatch from the Headquarters of the Mongolian-Soviet forces in the MPR, from July 6 to 12 there have been intermittent battles between Mongolian-Soviet and Japano-Manchurian forces in the area of Nomon-Kan-Burd-Obo and east of the Khalkhin Gol river. On July 5 the Japano-Manchurian units were thrust back from the territory of the MPR by a determined counterattack of Mongolian-Soviet land and air forces, and by the end of July 6 nearly all of them had been driven back to Manchurian territory.

At dawn on July 8, Japano-Manchurian units, reinforced by fresh reserves brought up from Manchuria and by large forces of tanks, heavy artillery and aircraft, again violated the border of the MPR to the east of the Khalkhin Gol river in the area of Nomon-Kan-Burd-Obo, and mounted an offensive.

From July 8 to 12 battles developing into hand-to-hand skirmishes occurred to the east of the Khalkhin Gol river. All the attacks

of the Japano-Manchurians were successfully repulsed by a determined counterattack of Mongolian-Soviet land forces supported by bomber and attack planes. The area east of the Khalkhin Gol river is being firmly held by Mongolian-Soviet forces.

According to figures provided by the Mongolian-Soviet Headquarters, in the period of the fighting from July 6 to 12 the Japano-Manchurian forces lost about 2,000 men killed and over 3,500 wounded. In the same period the Mongolian-Soviet forces captured 254 prisoners, four guns, four tanks, 15 armoured cars, 70 machine-guns and other weapons.

Important documents have been captured, including Order No. 1532, dated June 20, issued by the Commander of the Kwantung Army, General Ueda, and Order No. 105, dated June 30, issued by the Commander of the 23rd Infantry Division, General Kamat-subara, dealing with the advance of the Japano-Manchurian forces on July 1 towards the Khalkhin Gol river. Among the captured are one captain (Kato Takeo) and 12 non-commissioned officers.

Both the testimonies of prisoners-of-war and the captured documents show beyond any doubt that this new Japanese adventure in the area of Lake Buir Nor had been thoroughly planned in advance.

Taking part in the battles against the Mongolian-Soviet forces were two Japanese infantry divisions, the 23rd and the 7th, as well as the 1st Mechanized Brigade, up to a hundred tanks with a motorized infantry regiment, the 1st Independent Heavy Field Artillery Regiment and up to 6 or 7 Japano-Manchurian cavalry regiments.

In these battles the Mongolian-Soviet forces lost 293 men killed and 653 wounded.

From July 6 to 12, in the area of Buir Nor and in the area of Nomon-Kan-Burd-Obo, there have been air battles and action by bomber planes on both sides, with the Mongolian-Soviet air force always emerging the victor. In the air battles from July 6 to 12, Mongolian-Soviet planes and anti-aircraft fire shot down 61 Japanese aircraft. Of the crews of these aircraft 12 Japanese airmen have been captured: Captain Marimoto, Lieutenant Amano, Lieutenant Mitsutomi, Sub-Lieutenant Mitsudo, Sergeant-Majors Saito, Miadzimo, Fuji, and Mitsutomi, and non-commissioned officers Ishibe, Takamatso, Ishijawa, and Motohora. Most of them are badly wounded.

A briefcase was captured containing orders and other documents issued by the Commander of the air force of the Kwantung Army, General Giga, who directed the operations of the Japanese planes.

In this period, the Mongolian-Soviet air force lost 11 aircraft.

From May 29 through July 12 a total of 199 Japanese aircraft were shot down. In the same period the Mongolian-Soviet air force lost 52 aircraft.

In the opinion of the Mongolian-Soviet Command, the Japanese infantry is fighting not badly, though it ought to fight much better, since both Japanese divisions, the 23rd and the 7th, are said to be the best divisions. If these divisions sustain defeat so easily, it is

because elements of demoralization are beginning to penetrate deep into the Japanese infantry, and thus the Japanese command is often compelled to send these units into the attack in a drunken state. The Japanese air and tank units are weaker than the Japanese infantry.

As regards the rumours spread by the Kwantung Army headquarters about the use by Mongolian-Soviet units of toxins and bacteriological means of warfare, the Headquarters of the Mongolian-Soviet forces regards these rumours as an impudent lie and malicious slander.

From *Izvestia*, No. 161 (6931),
July 14, 1939.

No. 375. Documents Handed by the Ambassadors of Britain and France in the USSR to the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR

July 17, 1939

ANGLO-FRANCO-SOVIET AGREEMENT

Article 1

The United Kingdom, France and the USSR undertake to give to each other immediately all effective assistance if one of these three countries becomes involved in hostilities with a European Power as a result either

1) of aggression aimed by that Power against one of the three countries, or

2) of aggression aimed by that Power against any European State whose independence or neutrality the contracting country concerned feels obliged to defend against such aggression.

It is agreed between the three contracting Governments that the word "aggression" in paragraph 2 above is to be understood as covering action accepted by the State in question under threat of force by another Power and involving the abandonment by it of its independence or neutrality.

The assistance provided for in the present Article will be given in conformity with the principles of the League of Nations but without its being necessary to follow the procedure of, or to await action by, the League.

ANGLO-FRANCO-SOVIET AGREEMENT

Protocol

The three contracting Governments have agreed as follows:

1. Paragraph 2 of Article 1 of the agreement signed by them today will apply to the following European States: Turkey, Greece, Rumania, Poland, Belgium, Estonia, Latvia and Finland.

2. The foregoing list of States is subject to revision by agreement between the three contracting Governments.

3. In the event of aggression or threat of aggression by a European Power against a European State not named in the foregoing list, the three contracting Governments will, without, prejudice to the immediate action which any of them may feel obliged to take, immediately consult together at the request of any one of them with a view to such action as may be mutually agreed upon.

4. The present supplementary agreement will not be made public.

From the archives.

No. 376. Telegram from the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR to the Ambassadors of the USSR in Britain and France

July 17, 1939

Today the Ambassadors stated that they did not insist on including Switzerland, Holland and Luxemburg in the secret Protocol and would list only the eight countries. However, the wording of the Protocol will require clarification.

There is still disagreement on how the definition of "indirect aggression" should be worded; our partners are resorting to all kinds of trickery and disgraceful subterfuge.¹³²

Also, we are insisting that a military pact is an inseparable part of a military-political agreement, which is what the draft treaty under discussion is, and categorically reject the Anglo-French proposal that we should first agree on the "political" part of the treaty and only then turn to the question of a military agreement. This dishonest Anglo-French proposal splits up what should be a single treaty into two separate treaties and contradicts our basic proposal to conclude the whole treaty all at once, including its military part, which is actually the most important and most political part of the treaty. You understand that if the overall agreement does not include as an integral part an absolutely concrete military agreement, the

treaty will be nothing but an empty declaration, and this is something we cannot accept.

Only crooks and cheats such as the negotiators on the Anglo-French Side have shown themselves to be all this time could pretend that our demands for the simultaneous conclusion of a political and military agreement are something new in the negotiations, while at the same time leaking a canard to the press intimating that we are demanding a military pact first, that is, before signing a political agreement. It is hard to understand just what they expect when they resort to such clumsy tricks in the negotiations. It seems that nothing will come of the endless negotiations. Then they will have no one but themselves to blame.

People's Commissar

From the archives.

No. 377. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in France to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the USSR

July 19, 1939

By not dealing fairly with you the negotiators are deceiving the public in their own countries, where the vast majority (at least here, in France) are waiting impatiently for the early conclusion of an effective agreement with us. The deception is primarily in the form of distorting our position—which they describe as one of constantly coming up with new demands—and of deliberately misinforming the public about the substance of our demands and the nature of the differences.

Thus, for example, the substance of our proposal regarding a military agreement, which we made in our very first aide-mémoire* in April, and which, according to my observations, was concurred in here by all serious advocates of a treaty ("worthless without a military agreement"), was deliberately distorted and presented to the public and to the press as a demand for the prior conclusion of a military pact, "entailing the disclosure of military secrets", without sufficient guarantee, or certainty, that a political agreement will, in fact, be reached (this, incidentally, is how Kérillis was informed).

An attempt has also been made to distort our definition of indirect aggression. In private conversations it was "deciphered" as a demand aimed at our attaining what would amount to freedom of

* See Document No. 239.

action in the Baltic region—and not only at a time of a real German threat, but whenever we wanted it.

In conversations with the Socialists the main emphasis was laid on the “independence of the Baltic States”. Others were intimidated with talk about the danger of being dragged into war. These distortions were being resorted to because after the Czechoslovakian experience there is hardly a single person here who, while favouring the erection of barriers against aggression, considers it adequate to fight only against “direct”, or open, aggression, that is, the very form of aggression which Hitler is known to avoid.

The three months’ procrastination in the talks has made it perfectly clear that our partners do not want to reach a real agreement with us, but, afraid of their own public, will conceal this fact and continue to hide behind the “secrecy of negotiations”. This is a trick which we must expose. We must make public what has taken place throughout the negotiations with no regard for diplomatic conventionalities. One hint from us that we may be compelled to do so may force the negotiators to change their tactics.

Ambassador

From the archives.

No. 378. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in France to the People’s Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the USSR

July 19, 1939

Bonnet invited me to go and see him. He imputed his invitation to a wish to dispel “the impression which seems to have been formed in Moscow” that some articles in the French press relating to the course of the negotiations and aimed against the USSR had been inspired from the top. The Minister gave assurances that for a long time neither he nor any member of his staff had given the press any information concerning the course of the negotiations. He has only told the press that it should calmly await results and not publicize unverified rumours.

After this introduction, Bonnet began complaining about the difficult conditions in which the negotiations were taking place. It was necessary to conduct business between “three capitals,” and to concert things with both London and Moscow. He spoke at still greater length though more cautiously than on previous occasions, about his prodding role in London. To illustrate his point he indicated that at his insistence London had dropped the question of guarantees to Switzerland and Holland and that, again under his pressure, London

had agreed to clarify the definition of indirect aggression so that now it covered "cases similar to the March seizure of Czechoslovakia". After this he was "sincerely convinced" that a formula had been found which should satisfy Moscow as well.

He also mentioned our demand "that it be agreed that the political treaty should come into effect only after the conclusion of the military convention" (this was how he formulated our position). None of the "arguments" which he marshalled against this was serious, and I did not find it hard to refute them.

1. The demand was a "new" one.

Nothing of the kind. Literally from the very first day we had been saying that the political and the military agreements were inseparable. I reminded him (and he had to acknowledge it) that already in March he himself had admitted that this demand was a just one.

2. "This reservation will cause public disenchantment in England and France (they have not yet succeeded in reaching a final agreement on anything) and will give encouragement to the opposing camp."

On the contrary, it will demonstrate the serious intentions of the three countries and their desire for effective co-operation.

3. In the case of the Turks and the Poles, a political agreement had been concluded first and only then did military negotiations begin.

This is no argument at all.

Towards the end Bonnet clearly began to back down and finally asked me "privately" whether I felt that "if he succeeded in persuading London (and he was not yet sure he could) to accept our demands concerning the military agreement Moscow would make concessions on the question of indirect aggression". To this I replied that I was not conducting the negotiations and was not even familiar with the precise texts of the documents, but I did know that Moscow had reached the last limits of concessions. Then he suddenly recalled that he too was "in effect not authorized to discuss the details" with me, and that he did not "want to interfere in the negotiations which by common agreement were being conducted in Moscow", that he had not invited me for that, and so forth. Yet he asked me to "give some assistance". To this I replied that the only assistance I could render was to advise him to stop bargaining and accept Moscow's proposal without further delay.

Ambassador

From the archives.

July 21, 1939

Of his talks with Sir Horace Wilson and Mr. Hudson of the Department of Overseas Trade, Herr Wohlthat told me the following:

1. Hudson had let him know through the Norwegian member of the Whaling Commission that he would very much like to have a talk with him. Thereupon, with my consent, a meeting was arranged, which took place yesterday afternoon. At this conversation, Hudson developed far-reaching plans for Anglo-German co-operation in opening up new world markets and exploiting existing ones. He said, among other things, that there were still three big regions in the world where Germany and England could find wide opportunities for activity: the British Empire, China and Russia. England alone could not adequately take care of her vast empire, and it would be quite possible for Germany to be given a rather comprehensive share. Just as little could Japan satisfy all China economically; in Russia the situation was similar.

Hudson went on to speak in greater detail of a delimitation of German and British spheres of interest and of the possibility of avoiding deadly competition in common markets.

Herr Wohlthat got the impression that Hudson knows how to think on big lines and has a thorough grasp of the matter.

2. In his first conversation with Herr Wohlthat, Sir Horace Wilson put forward ideas which he developed in more detailed and positive form in the second. Sir Horace had prepared a paper in which a regular program was formulated; it began with the words: "Under the assumption that..." (presumably: Under the assumption that political agreement with England is reached, the following points will enter into force). Sir Horace Wilson made it perfectly clear that Chamberlain approved this program; Wilson invited Wohlthat to have a talk there and then with Chamberlain, in which the latter would confirm what he had said. However, in view of the unofficial nature of his talks, Wohlthat did not consider it appropriate to have such a conversation with Chamberlain.

When, after the first conversation with Wilson, the opportunity for a talk with Hudson presented itself, Herr Wohlthat, with my acquiescence, arranged for a second talk with Wilson; he wanted to have greater clarity on certain points than it had been possible to get in the first conversation. As his motive for suggesting this second conversation, he referred to his talk with Hudson and told Wilson that he wanted to give him an account of it and at the same time to ascertain whether Hudson had been speaking on the instructions of the Cabinet.

The program discussed by Herr Wohlthat and Sir Horace Wilson was as follows:

- a) Political points,
- b) Military points,
- c) Economic points.

Ad a)

1) *Pact of Non-Aggression.* Herr Wohlthat had taken this to mean the customary pacts of non-aggression such as Germany had concluded with other Powers, but Wilson wanted the pact of non-aggression to be understood as renunciation of aggression in principle.

2) *Pact of Non-Intervention,* which was to include a delimitation of the spheres* of the Great Powers, in particular as between Britain and Germany.

Ad b) Limitation of Armaments.

- 1) Naval,
- 2) Land,
- 3) Air.

Ad c)

1) *Colonial Questions.* Here the subject chiefly discussed was how Africa could be developed. Wilson suggested the already known project for the formation of an extensive African colonial zone, for which certain uniform regulations were to be established. The question how far the German colonies which would be restored to us would remain our individual property after the creation of the international zone was left open. That the British in this respect are ready, or would be ready, at least in theory, to go a long way to meet us is to be presumed from the fact that Herr Wohlthat has quite reliably learned that in February the British Cabinet decided to restore the colonies, as such, to Germany. Sir Horace Wilson also spoke of German colonial activity in the Pacific; but on this question Herr Wohlthat was very reserved.

2) *Raw Materials and Their Acquisition by Germany.*

3) *Industrial Markets.*

4) *Settlement of the International Debt Problem.*

5) *Exchange of Financial Facilities.***

By this Sir Horace Wilson meant the sanitation of Eastern and Southeastern Europe by Germany. In connection with this point Herr Wohlthat said that Germany would have to insist on a qualified most favoured nation clause. When I asked Herr Wohlthat what this meant, he explained that the most favoured nation clause, coupled with a world-wide gold standard, as it had functioned before the war, was no longer as effective as it used to be. Owing to differences of currency systems and living standards, as well as of production costs, it was impossible to grant such different countries as Canada, Argentina and Rumania, for instance, the same privileges in their export trade with Germany. Countries like Rumania or

* "Grossräume."

** In the original these words are in English.

Yugoslavia, with their low living standards, must be given better chances by allowing part of their products to be imported into Germany at lower customs rates. Herr Wohlthat said that he realized that this would be tantamount to the abolition of the most favoured nation system; it was however very important how the child was named, so as not to offend others.

Herr Wilson* suggested as the general objective a broad Anglo-German agreement on all major questions, as had been originally envisaged by the Führer. In this way questions of such great importance would be raised and settled that the deadlocked Near Eastern questions, such as Danzig and Poland, would be pushed into the background and become immaterial. Sir Horace Wilson definitely told Herr Wohlthat that the conclusion of a non-aggression pact would enable Britain to rid herself of her commitments *vis-à-vis* Poland. As a result the Polish problem would lose much of its acuteness.

Asked by Herr Wohlthat whether Hudson's proposals had been approved, Wilson replied that they were discussed by influential members of the Cabinet, but without a final decision having been taken at this stage.

Herr Wohlthat thereupon remarked that a radical settlement of the questions discussed with Mr. Hudson would have to be preceded by a settlement of colonial questions.

To a further question by Herr Wohlthat, whether in that case the British Government would agree to the German Side putting other questions, besides those enumerated, on the agenda, Wilson answered in the affirmative; he said that the Führer had only to take a sheet of paper and jot down his points; the British Government would be prepared to discuss them.

Then Herr Wohlthat asked how confirmation of this programme of negotiations could be obtained through some responsible British representative or authority, in order that the negotiations might be put on a tangible footing.

To this Sir Horace Wilson replied that the decisive thing here was that the Führer should authorize some person to discuss the above-mentioned program. If the Führer made his willingness known in this way, it was immaterial to the British how the further negotiations were conducted.

Referring to his conversation in June, Herr Wohlthat told Sir Horace Wilson that he had made a report on it to Field-Marshal Goering; he added that he would try to find out whether the Führer considered that the moment had now come to start such discussions.

Sir Horace Wilson said very feelingly that if this succeeded, a most important step would have been made toward overcoming the difficulties.

Sir Horace Wilson further said that it was contemplated holding

* The name in the typescript is "Wohlthat", but it has been crossed out and the word "Wilson" written above in blue pencil.

new elections in Britain this autumn. From the point of view of purely domestic political tactics, it was all one to the Government whether the elections were held under the cry "Be Ready for A Coming War!" or under the cry "A Lasting Understanding With Germany in Prospect and Achievable!" It could obtain the backing of the electors for either of these cries and assure its rule for another five years. Naturally, it preferred the peaceful cry.

Von Dirksen

From *Documents and Materials
Relating to the Eve of the
Second World War*, Vol. II,
Dirksen Papers (1938-1939),
Moscow, 1948.

No. 380. New Violation of the Border by Japanese Forces (TASS Announcement)

July 23, 1939

According to a report issued by the Headquarters of the Mongolian-Soviet forces in the MPR, between July 12 and 20, in the area of Lake Buir Nor, the Japano-Manchurian forces, while displaying no particular activity, harassed the positions of the Mongolian-Soviet forces to the east of the Khalkhin Gol river with artillery and machine-gun fire. On only one occasion, towards nightfall on July 12, in a sector southwest of Nomon-Kan-Burd-Obo, a detachment of Japanese infantry, up to battalion supported by artillery, attempted to drive a wedge into the positions of the Mongolian-Soviet forces, but the detachment was encircled by Mongolian-Soviet forces and was completely destroyed. Left behind at the scene of battle were over 100 Japanese dead, four three-inch guns, eight anti-tank guns, 500 shells, 5 heavy machine-guns and other armament captured by the Mongolian-Soviet forces. The Mongolian-Soviet forces sustained insignificant losses.

On July 21 and 22 the Japano-Manchurian forces further stepped up their operations and several times tried to attack the Mongolian-Soviet forces. However, all their attacks were beaten off.

The Mongolian-Soviet forces are in full control of the locality to the east of the Khalkhin Gol river.

In the period between July 12 and 20, the Japanese air force carried out only reconnaissance operations. On one occasion only, on July 16, up to 50 Japanese fighters appeared in the air, but upon catching sight of Mongolian-Soviet aircraft in the air, they withdrew

to their own territory without doing battle. On July 21, in the area east and southeast of Lake Buir Nor, the Japanese again violated the border with an intrusion by their aircraft. An air battle ensued over the territory of the MPR in which up to 120 Japanese fighters, brought in from various regions of Manchuria, took part. On the Mongolian-Soviet side about 100 fighters took part in the battle. The battle lasted about one hour and ended on Manchurian territory in the Japano-Manchurian planes being pursued by Mongolian-Soviet planes.

In this air battle the Mongolian-Soviet aircraft shot down 13 Japanese aircraft of whose crews two Japanese fliers were captured alive. In the battle the Mongolian-Soviet side lost three aircraft.

The Command of the Mongolian-Soviet forces called the rumours spread by the headquarters of the Kwantung Army about a bombing raid carried out by a Mongolian-Soviet aircraft on the station of Fuliardi (near Tsitsihar) a malicious fabrication.

From *Izvestia*, No. 169 (6939),
July 23, 1939.

No. 381. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in Britain to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the USSR

July 24, 1939

In summing up the information, which I have obtained from a wide variety of sources in the last ten days, I believe it is necessary to point out that my information about Chamberlain's intentions which I communicated to you after a conversation with Lloyd George* is being increasingly corroborated. The Premier is now making a desperate attempt to dodge fulfilment of the obligations to guarantee Poland,** undertaken last spring, and at the same time to revive his old policy of "appeasement". To these ends the English Government is continuing to exert strong pressure on the Polish Government, recommending "moderation" on the question of Danzig. At the same time a stick and carrot policy is being pursued in respect of Germany: on the one hand, there is mobilization of the British navy, and an air force demonstration was staged in France (and one probably will be staged in Poland, too, very shortly); and on the other hand, there are Hudson's "personal conversa-

* See Document No. 372.

** See Documents Nos. 201, 213.

tions" with Wohlthat in London* about the possibility of granting Germany colossal loans of up to a thousand million pounds if Hitler renounced in earnest his "aggressive intentions" (meaning if he should leave the West alone and turn to face the East). Despite official denials, there is no doubt that Hudson was expressing the Premier's sentiment in his conversations. It is rather significant that Hudson is still at his post as if nothing at all had happened, although under normal circumstances he should have been made to resign if, as Chamberlain asserts, he had been acting without the latter's knowledge and entirely at his own risk when he astounded Wohlthat with his "sensational" proposals.

It has been learned from reliable sources that through unofficial emissaries¹³³ Chamberlain is now sounding Hitler to see whether it might not be possible to "settle" or at least to postpone the aggravation of the Danzig problem. If Chamberlain should succeed in this there will no longer be any need for an early conclusion of the Anglo-Soviet negotiations. Lately the Foreign Office Press Department has been saying to journalists "unofficially" that a "postponement" of the negotiations for a certain period of time is possible. This indeed should not be ruled out, especially since on August 4 Parliament is rising for the holidays at least for a couple of months: so the Government will be free of even the imperfect control which has so far been exercised by the Opposition. In preparation for such a state of affairs government circles are now inundating London with all sorts of rumours and fabrications so as to place the blame for a possible breakdown of the negotiations upon the Soviet Government. In particular, in the last two or three days a story has been circulating in parliamentary lobbies to the effect that the British Government had learned "from the most reliable sources" that some "highly placed person" in Moscow had declared boastfully the other day that in August Halifax was going to be kicked out of the Government and in September Chamberlain himself would fall. This is designed to prove that the Soviet Government does not want to conclude a treaty but is merely using the negotiations as a weapon to help bring down the present Cabinet.

To better evaluate the situation one must also bear in mind the fact that the Premier is constantly looking for a convenient moment to hold parliamentary elections and consolidate the power of the Conservatives for another five-year term. It is known for sure that the leaders of the "party machine," who two months ago had advised the Premier against calling an election without the "Russian Pact," have now changed their minds and believe that with the Opposition being as weak as it is now, an "agreement on Danzig" would be quite enough to win the election. Such are the hopes and designs of the Chamberlain clique. To what extent they will come true is another matter.

Ambassador

From the archives.

* See Document No. 379.

No. 382. Letter from the German Ambassador in Britain to the
Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Germany

July 24, 1939

Subject: Decision of the British Government to pursue a constructive policy.

Now that the excitement over the Danzig week-end crisis has subsided, the general atmosphere has calmed down, thus enabling the leading personalities to concentrate their thoughts on the decisive question, namely, whether the German-British tension is driving to war, or whether a settlement can be reached by peaceful means. Politicians, both responsible and irresponsible, bellicose and sober, are agreed that the state of extreme tension which has now lasted so many months cannot go on. While, however, the press and the majority of politicians are confining themselves to fatalism or to bellicose utterances, the few really decisive statesmen in Britain have considered and put into more concrete form the lines of thought mentioned in my report of June 24, 1939, on a constructive policy towards Germany.¹³⁰ The trends in foreign and domestic policy described in this report—tension with Japan, stagnation in the negotiations for a pact with Russia, doubts as to the value of the Polish ally, considerations of election tactics—have in the meantime had further effect and have strengthened the constructive trends.

General considerations as to how a settlement with Germany could be achieved by peaceful means seem to have crystallized into a number of concrete points, which it is desired to discuss as a whole and simultaneously. Based on a policy of political appeasement, which is to secure the principle of non-aggression and the limitation of spheres of political interest by a comprehensive formula, a comprehensive economic programme is in the process of being worked out, to include the following questions: colonies, raw materials, spheres of economic interest, agreements over co-operation in other markets. Naturally, as being the point of greatest interest to the British, the limitation of armaments has been included in the programme. On these plans, entertained by leading circles, Staatsrat Wohlthat, who during his stay in London last week has had detailed conversations on them* on British initiative, will be able to give more exact information.

The question which causes the sponsors of these ideas the greatest headaches is how to start these talks. Public opinion is so roused and the warmongers and intriguers have gained such an ascendancy, that publication of such plans for negotiations with Germany would immediately be torpedoed by Churchill and other agitators with cries of "No second Munich!" or "No return to the policy of appeasement!" How active and dangerous this group is, has

* See Document No. 383.

been shown by the publication of the fact that confidential talks between Wohlthat and Sir Horace Wilson and between Wohlthat and Mr. Hudson, the Secretary for Overseas Trade, have taken place; more poison was spread by the printing of a quite fantastic and mendacious account of the programme of the negotiations. The fact that the *Daily Telegraph* and *News Chronicle* are leading this campaign of incitement clearly shows who are the men behind it.

Those concerned with working out a list of points for negotiation therefore realize that the preparatory steps in respect of Germany must be taken in the greatest secrecy. Only if Germany's willingness to negotiate is established and agreement is reached, at least on the programme, perhaps on some general principles, would the British Government feel strong enough to acquaint the public of their intentions and the steps so far taken. If, however, the Government could in this way open up the prospect of a German-British settlement, they feel certain that the public would hail such an announcement with the greatest joy and that then all the mischief-makers would be reduced to silence.

So much is, indeed, expected from the realization of such a plan, that it is even considered an effective election slogan, which would bring victory to the Government parties in the autumn and thus enable them to remain in power for another five years. However, the Whips are more than ever convinced that the election could just as surely be won on the opposite slogan of "Preparedness for the Coming War", should there be no prospect of a settlement with Germany.

This conviction means, at the same time, that the decision in principle on starting negotiations with Germany, and the achievement of agreement in principle, are subject to a certain time limit. For, since the elections are presumably to be held in November, and the organization of the preparations for them takes some six weeks, the British would have to try and get matters straightened out with Germany by the end of September at the latest. As to the time factor, there is a certain amount of optimism in that people think that the Germans too—assuming that in principle they are willing to negotiate—would desire a certain speeding up, in view of the Party Rally at Nuremberg.

In conclusion I should like to point out that, in these trends towards coming to a settlement with Germany, the German-Polish problem has also found a place, in so far as it is thought that, in the event of a German-British settlement being reached, the Polish problem would also be easier to solve, as a calmer atmosphere would help negotiations and there would be less British interest in Poland.

The plans of leading British statesmen as described above may appear Utopian, given the unbridled language used by the British press and politicians, and in view of the fact that the encirclement policy is being continued, albeit not with the same enthusiasm. But such plans gain in probability if one considers the limited influence of the British sensational press and, moreover, bears in mind that,

for Great Britain, agreement with Germany is still the most worthwhile aim—as opposed to the alternative of a war, which would be undertaken only with great reluctance, but which, however, failing agreement with Germany, is considered inevitable.

Dirksen

From *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945, Series D, Vol. VI, pp. 969-971.*

No. 383. Memorandum by the Commissioner for the Four-Year Plan of Germany

July 24, 1939

Minute on Conversations with Sir Horace Wilson on July 18, 3:15 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., and on July 21, 1:0 p.m. to 1:30 p.m., with Sir Joseph Ball on July 20, 6:20 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., and with Mr. Hudson on July 20, 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. (All Conversations took place at the Request of the British Gentlemen and with the Knowledge of Ambassador von Dirksen.)

We reverted to the conversation which Sir Horace, Sir Joseph Ball and I had at the Duke of Westminster's at the beginning of June. I described to Sir Horace my impressions on my return to Berlin after a four weeks' stay in Spain. In my opinion the atmosphere between Berlin and London had considerably deteriorated. British policy was expressing in every way, also in the negotiations with Russia, the determination to unite all forces against Germany. This was having a decisive influence on the assessment of the situation in Berlin. Leading circles considered the actual British policy to be a new encirclement. By contrast the speeches of Halifax and Chamberlain indicated, in a non-committal way, readiness for discussions. The press campaign was rendering a sober examination and handling of the problems more difficult at present.

My impression was that both German-Polish and also German-British relations had deteriorated. The Poles had made statements which rendered the return of Danzig to the Reich more difficult and which, in practice, limited the possibilities of negotiations almost entirely to Customs questions only. But the possibilities of negotiations on Danzig had also been restricted by some British statements.

Although I had not read all the relevant speeches, I had, however, heard from an authoritative source that Chamberlain in his latest statement had described the status of Danzig as just. Lord

Halifax was alleged to have again put forward the theory of the balance of power as being the basis of British foreign policy. It was precisely this point which would make it still more difficult to evolve a solution of the present situation, for, as a result of the obligations which had been undertaken, British policy could no longer make free decisions in all conceivable cases.

Although it was my impression that the Führer would do nothing rash over the Danzig question, the fact nevertheless remained that the Polish Government could never have acted as they did had they not been supported by the help of the British Government and even incited by agitators. But the Danzig question must be tackled realistically. In the German view it would in no way be adequate if negotiations were only to cover the status of the Free City and its improvement.

Sir Horace appeared surprised at these statements. In his view, the speeches of Chamberlain and Lord Halifax were not to be taken in this way. He gave me the text of both speeches. The speech at the Chatham House dinner of the Royal Institute of International Affairs had been a traditional address, more in the character of a politico-philosophical lecture. Several drafts of the speech had been prepared, which he too had read. He could no longer recollect exactly the text of the last draft. In any case that which, in the British view, should substantially be stated was something other than emphasis on the return of British policy to the theory and practice of the "balance of power". Halifax had wanted to express readiness for co-operation and for a policy of peaceful change in the present situation, in so far as Germany desired a change and agreement could be reached in negotiations with Britain.

Sir Horace said in a very sympathetic way that he wanted to speak to me as to one who was a colleague and a friend. It was in the interests of us both that uncontrollable influences should not cause an armed clash as a result of the present powerful massing of forces—a clash which might develop far beyond its immediate cause in Eastern Europe, into a new fundamental struggle between the groups led by Britain and Germany. We were both interested, on our Governments' behalf, in maintaining orderly forms of government and in not exposing present-day civilization to a crisis of the greatest magnitude in consequence of such a clash. If such a calamity were to befall, he thought that we would both wish to be able to say with a clear conscience that we had done all in our power to contribute, within our Governments, to a peaceful solution by furnishing careful information and practical advice.

Sir Horace drew attention to the fact that at Munich in September, 1938, some persons had had the impression that Britain was not prepared to fight. Because of this, it had been necessary to bring home to the public the gravity of the situation. Above all, the Opposition had put pressure on the Government, as it had been assumed that the reason for the British attitude at Munich had been that Britain's armaments were not completed. If that was supposed to

have been the case then, in an emergency, today the situation was completely changed. The British Air Force and the Navy had been tremendously reinforced. Britain today was militarily prepared; one need, so to speak, only press a button in London and the whole war industry would go full steam ahead. British obligations and guarantees, too, should be understood in the sense that, since March 15, Britain had been forced to act in earnest. It had been a process of strengthening the British position ("process of firming the English position"), which was now completed. There was no doubt that the mood and readiness of the people for a war with Germany had stiffened more than was evident from the peaceful attitude adopted by the Government.

Sir Horace had, apparently in readiness for our conversation, prepared a memorandum, which he had brought in by his secretary and which began with the words "in the assumption of". This memorandum obviously contained an elaboration, approved by Neville Chamberlain, of the points which would have to be dealt with between the German and British Governments. On the basis of the Führer's speech of April 28, he had drawn up these points for negotiations.

Sir Horace holds the view that the conversations must be held in secret. At present only Britain and Germany should negotiate; France and Italy should only be brought in later. Both Governments could come to an understanding to inform the friendly Powers by a definite date. Sir Horace declared that Great Britain wished to negotiate with Germany as an equal partner. The highest-ranking personages should be brought together through the negotiations. Beyond this, the German-British agreements and declarations should bring out in every way the desire to co-operate. The results of the conversations should be concerned with agreements in which the basic principles of a joint German-British policy are laid down, which will then have to be worked out by constant further co-operation in individual agreements.

As on previous occasions, Sir Horace asked me for a statement of points which, in the Führer's view, should be discussed by both Governments. I told him that we could only speak unofficially and suggested that we discuss his memorandum. He asked when I was coming to London again. I said that I had no commission which would take me to London in the foreseeable future. He asked me to be good enough to put the German points into a form and language clearly understandable to the British. Perhaps he was being too optimistic and the solution which he considered possible appeared to some observers to be unreal, given the present situation. He had, however, had an opportunity of observing the Führer and he thought that the Führer could, as a statesman for peace, achieve even more than he had already accomplished in the building up of Greater Germany. He believed that the Führer wished to avoid the outbreak of a world war caused by the Danzig question. If the Greater German policy in respect of territorial claims was approach-

ing the end of its demands, the Führer could take this opportunity of finding, in conjunction with Britain, a form which would enable him to go down in history as one of the greatest statesmen and which would lead to a revolution in world opinion.

If I wished to have a specific statement from the British Government, he could promise me that I would be given a responsible opinion by the Prime Minister the same day or on the following day. It naturally depended on what was the best way for such negotiations. They took the view that the negotiations ought not to be brought to the knowledge of persons who were fundamentally hostile to an understanding. In the present situation it ought not to be a question of political manoeuvres, but of realizing one of the greatest political combinations it was possible to imagine. Certainly the British Government would not like to create the impression that they desired to negotiate in all circumstances. If no other solution was possible, Britain and the Empire were today ready for, and determined upon, an armed conflict. Given the mentality of some circles, it appeared to him of the greatest importance that there should be no false impression as to British readiness for peace or for war.

Programme for German-British Cooperation. (Sir Horace W.)

A. Political Questions

1) A joint German-British declaration that forcible aggression will not be employed by either country as an instrument of international policy. ("Joint Anglo-German declaration not to use aggression".) This should not take the form of a non-aggression pact between the two countries, but of a general declaration on a political principle, whereby both countries renounced the use of forcible aggression as an instrument of policy. Here Sir Horace takes the view that such a declaration would make Britain's guarantees to Poland and Rumania superfluous, since, as a result of such a declaration, Germany would not attack these States and they could not therefore feel that their national existence was threatened by Germany.

2) Mutual declarations of non-interference by Germany in respect of the British Commonwealth of Nations and by Great Britain in respect of Greater Germany. I drew attention to the fact that it was not only a question of the frontiers of States and possessions, but also of territories of special interest and of economic influence. For Germany this would apply especially to East and South East Europe. Sir Horace replied that this point needed especially careful political wording and that the political definition would probably best result from an examination of Germany's economic interests. Britain was only interested in keeping her share of European trade.

Note. By the declarations of principle in respect of (1) and (2) the British apparently wish to establish a new platform for dealing with the questions between Germany and Poland. The Danzig ques-

tion, after a broad German-British agreement, would play a minor part for Britain.

3) The Colonial and/or Mandates question. A German-British declaration on a fundamental revision of the relevant provisions of the Versailles Treaty.

As other States besides Great Britain administer mandates, amongst which are former German colonial territories, the position adopted by the British would be the starting-point for opening up the colonial question as a whole. As to the practical solution of the colonial question, members of the Cabinet have from time to time discussed plans, of which one plan is dealt with under: "C. Economic Questions".

B. Military Questions

A German-British declaration on the limitation of armaments and a common policy towards third countries.

1) Naval agreement.

2) Air agreement.

3) Army agreement.

The Naval Agreement would be suitably modelled on the experiences of the previous agreement.

The Air Agreement and the Army Agreement should take into account the special strategic and military conditions of the British Empire and of the Greater German Reich in Central Europe.

The German-British agreements would have to be brought into relation with existing agreements, and agreements newly to be concluded, with third countries.

C. Economic Questions

1) A German-British declaration on a common policy for the supply of raw materials and food to both countries and an agreement on the export of German and British industrial products to the principal markets.

Note. Should German-British cooperation in all fields be desired, I consider it possible, from my knowledge of the views of leading British politicians, to ensure the long term cooperation of the two greatest European industrial nations. By directing the great national economic forces, which could be expanded in Europe and in the world under the leadership of Germany and Britain through the co-operation of their Governments, an unprecedented economic boom could be achieved and a further raising of the peoples' standards of living, which would be a determining factor for an industrial epoch. Systematic German-British cooperation would, above all, extend to the economic development of three great markets:

The British Empire (especially India, South Africa, Canada, Australia).

China (in cooperation with Japan).

Russia (assuming that Stalin's policy develops accordingly).

German-British cooperation, which would secure peace for a foreseeable period, opens up unlimited new possibilities for all the forces of labour and capital in view of modern industrial equipment. The dangers of unemployment during the change-over of industrial production from armaments to the production of capital and consumer goods could be avoided in conjunction with these plans. It would be possible within the framework of German-British co-operation to finance the reorganization of British and German industry. Large scale economic planning by Britain and Germany would make possible the long term financing of the latest raw material and industrial projects in other continents.

2) *Colonial Questions.* In connection with German-British economic cooperation, Mr. Hudson discussed the plan for a "colonial condominium" in Africa. Underlying this plan is the idea of a common opening up of Africa by the European colonial powers. It would be a question of a large integrated territory, which would embrace the greater part of tropical and sub-tropical Africa. Togoland, Nigeria, the Cameroons, the Congo, Kenya, Tanganyika (German East Africa), Portuguese and Spanish West and East Africa and Northern Rhodesia might be included. In this territory the production of raw materials and food, the investment of capital goods, foreign trade and currency, transport, administration, police and military control could be uniformly organized.

According to Sir Horace Wilson, other practical solutions of the colonial problem are also possible.

Mr. Hudson said he was not allowed to speak officially of an understanding between British and German industry; but he supported any practical arrangement which came to his knowledge. Naturally, Britain wanted to win the next war; but he would consider himself more than foolish if he did not try to speak to me now instead of at the next Peace Conference. After a war the present problems would be distinctly more difficult for all participants than they are now.

3) A joint German-English declaration on the relation of both countries' currencies to each other, on the basis of an international debt settlement for Germany. Loans for the German Reichsbank. Restoration of the link between the European capital markets. Settlement of South East Europe's currency and debt question led by the Berlin market. Adjustment of the most favoured nation clause to the special conditions of production of the European agricultural nations.

German-British agreement on the British share in the markets within the special economic spheres of interest of the Greater German Reich in Eastern and South East Europe.

On the question as to when the negotiations should be held, I

should like to point out that the Prime Minister, as leader of the Conservative Party, must decide for the middle of September on what programme he wants to fight the General Election, which, according to confidential information from Sir Joseph Ball, is scheduled for November 14. Sir Joseph Ball believes the Election will result in Neville Chamberlain and the Conservative Party remaining in power for a further five years.

Sir Horace Wilson said, on parting, that he saw the possibility of a common foreign trade policy for the two greatest European industrial States. Neither Britain nor Germany could, alone, and in competition with all the other industrial countries, bring about anything like so great an economic expansion as a systematically directed cooperation would achieve.

Sir Horace said: If the Führer would agree to conversations, this would be regarded as a sign of returning confidence.

I request instructions as to whether and in what form I can give Sir Horace an answer.

Wohlthat

From *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945*, Series D, Vol. VI, pp. 977-983.

No. 384. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in Britain to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the USSR

July 25, 1939

Today Halifax gave me an account of the last Moscow meeting (held on July 23) and informed me that the British Government was accepting the Soviet proposal to begin military talks at once, without waiting for the completion of the political negotiations. An English military mission could leave for Moscow in about seven or ten days. Its composition has not yet been determined.

Halifax then said that since the British Government had met us on the question of the simultaneous entry into force of the Pact and the Military Convention, he hoped very much that we would meet the British Government on the only question still at issue, that of indirect aggression. Halifax asserted that the English formula covered cases of aggression of the Czechoslovakian type. Anything going beyond the limits of a case of this type would be a subject that required consultations. Halifax was asking us to be content with this.

Ambassador

From the archives.

No. 385. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in France to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the USSR

July 25, 1939

The correctness of the position we have taken in the negotiations has become particularly clear to everyone in the light of the Hudson-Wohlthat negotiations* and the Anglo-Japanese agreement which is in the nature of a capitulation.¹³⁴ Among the French both these facts have caused great concern, which is being toned down in the press in accordance with instructions from above. Every honest person who is in favor of reaching agreement with us is asking himself what confidence Moscow can have in the negotiators when, as the negotiations are actually in progress, a bridge is being built towards agreement with Germany, and shameful overtures are made to Japan, while the USSR and Japan are involved in a military conflict. The Left-wingers are quite worried by the indubitable fact that the loudly proclaimed slogan of combatting German espionage and corruption is beginning to be converted in this country into a struggle against the Communist Party and against the "agents of Moscow". This does not make for greater confidence in the sincerity of the desire to co-operate with us.

Ambassador

From the archives.

No. 386. Telegram from the Soviet Naval Attaché in Japan to the General Staff of the Red Army

July 25, 1939

Lately anti-USSR utterances by admirals have become more frequent. On June 26 the Command of Ominato** came out with certain threats against the USSR. On July 20 threats against the USSR were uttered by Kanadzawa. On July 24 the Ominato Command repeated its threat of June 26 in sharper terms. On the same day Yonai declared that vigorous measures would be taken against the unlawful pressure of the Soviet authorities.

The admirals' statements were deliberately timed to coincide with a review by the Emperor on July 21 of ships of the United

* See Documents Nos. 379, 382, 383.

** A Japanese naval base.

Squadron near Tokyo, and were in line with the new instructions of the Centre to the Command of the Kwantung Army: to continue military operations at Buir Nor on an extended scale. The admirals are acting under the pressure of the Kwantung Army Command. The false reports about "victories" at Buir Nor and about oppression of Japanese at the concessions are aimed at indoctrinating Japanese public opinion with the idea that our armed forces are weak and that it is necessary to launch an armed action against the USSR on land and on sea. In the light of this the forces guarding Vladivostok, Kamchatka, and Sakhalin should be augmented.

A. Kovalev

From the archives.

No. 387. Japanese Provocation Continues (TASS Communique)

July 27, 1939

According to a report issued by the Headquarters of the Mongolian-Soviet forces in the MPR, from July 23 to 25 Japano-Manchurian forces made repeated attempts to attack and capture the positions of the Mongolian-Soviet forces east of the Khalkhin Gol river. These attempts were repulsed by the Mongolian-Soviet forces, with the Japano-Manchurian troops sustaining heavy losses.

The Soviet-Mongolian forces are firmly in control of their previous positions on the eastern bank of the Khalkhin Gol river.

During these days, besides clashes of ground forces, there have also been air battles.

In the air battles on July 23 the Japanese air forces lost 15 fighters, two bombers, two reconnaissance aircraft and one spotter balloon. After these battles five aircraft of the Mongolian-Soviet air force failed to return to base. On the same day Colonel Kowaro, commander of a Japanese light-bomber air detachment, was shot down and taken prisoner. His testimony confirms the fact that the Japanese have concentrated a large air force in the area of operations by bringing in aircraft from Changchun, Harbin, Sipinghai, Hailar and other areas.

Air battles occurred also on July 24 and 25. Clashes starting with encounters of small groups of fighters usually developed into large-scale air battles. In the air battles on July 24, the Japanese lost 34 fighters, two bombers and one balloon. Nine aircraft of the Mongolian-Soviet air force failed to return to base.

On July 25, 19 Japanese aircraft were shot down and one balloon burned. Six aircraft of the Mongolian-Soviet air force failed to return to base.

From *Izvestia*, No. 172 (6942),
July 27, 1939.

No. 388. Telegram from the State Secretary of the German Ministry for Foreign Affairs to the German Ambassador in Britain

July 31, 1939

On his return to Berlin, Wohlthat made a report on his conversation with Sir Horace Wilson,* which has reached the Foreign Minister through Field Marshal Göring. This report contains Wilson's suggestions for comprehensive German-British co-operation and agreements in political, military and economic respects. These suggestions appear to be regarded on the British side as an official feeler. Wohlthat did not apparently put the obvious question to Wilson, whether the suggestions presuppose the simultaneous abandonment of the encirclement negotiations, in particular with Moscow. The Foreign Minister requests, as already stated in the preceding telegram, a report by telegram on the substance of Wohlthat's conversations, as well as on your attitude to them.

Weizsäcker

From *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945*, Series D,
Vol. VI, p. 1026.

No. 389. Telegram from the German Ambassador in Britain to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Germany

August 1, 1939

The Wehrmacht Attachés are agreed in observing a surprising scepticism in British military circles about the forthcoming talks with the Soviet Armed Forces. It is impossible to brush aside the

* See Documents Nos. 379, 383.

impression that, on the British side, the talks are being conducted mainly to obtain for once a picture of the real fighting strength of the Soviet Army. The little material so far available to the British makes it, in any case, appear possible that the report by the Military Delegation going to Moscow will turn out to be a negative one.

This impression is strengthened by the composition of the British Military Delegation which has been announced today. *None* of the three representatives of the Services has had a training which specially qualifies him to negotiate on operational measures. All three gentlemen, however, are combatant officers, who consequently have a particularly well-trained eye for the fighting value of a unit and its equipment with effective military material.

Dirksen

From *Documents on German Foreign Policy. 1918-1945.*
Series D, Vol. VI, pp. 1034-1035.

No. 390. Letter from the German Ambassador in Britain to the State Secretary of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Germany

August 1, 1939

1) As regards the Wohlthat/Sir Horace Wilson conversation and my attitude towards it, I refer you to my telegram No. 277 of July 31. The fact that during the conversation Wohlthat did not expressly raise the question of the abandonment of the encirclement policy is to be attributed to the agreement he had with me that he should, in general, confine himself to a purely receptive attitude.

2) Although the conversation did not go deeply into political matters I have the impression that it was intended, *via* questions of economic policy, to suggest a comprehensive constructive programme. I described the difficulties the British Government would have to face in carrying out this programme, in view of the present mood of public opinion, in my report of July 24, No. A 2974.*

3) That a settlement with Germany would not be compatible with the simultaneous prosecution of an encirclement policy is clear to leading personalities here. The determining considerations in such respect are roughly as follows:

a) A settlement with Germany would chemically dissolve (*chemisch auflösen*) the Danzig problem, so to speak, and would clear the way for a German-Polish arrangement in which Britain would no longer need to be interested.

b) The progress of the pact negotiations with Russia is regarded sceptically, in spite of, or just because of, the despatch of a Military

* See Document No. 382.

Mission. This is borne out by the composition of the British Military Mission: the Admiral, formerly Commander-in-Chief, Portsmouth [*sic*], is practically on the retired list and was never on the Naval Staff, the General is also purely a combatant officer; the Air Marshal is outstanding as a pilot and an instructor, but not as a strategist. This seems to indicate that the task of the Military Mission is rather to ascertain the fighting value of the Soviet press [*sic*] than to conclude agreements on operations.

A high-ranking officer in the Air Ministry recently remarked to the Air Attaché that he was convinced that neither the British nor the Russians had any serious desire to conclude an agreement.

c) As to what is thought of the military value of Poland, doubts also prevail which find expression in reserve about financial questions. General Ironside's report is also said not to have been any too favourable.¹³⁵

d) Rheden [*sic*] Buxton (brother of Lord Noel-Buxton*), a politician who enjoys the best connections and belongs to the Labour Party, approved, in a conversation with the Counsellor of Embassy, ideas similar to those of Wilson's, and described the abandonment of the policy of encirclement as a natural result of settlement with Germany. A memorandum on the conversation with Buxton follows by the same air mail.

3[4] There is a mounting feeling that the possibilities of an agreement in principle with Germany ought to be ascertained within the next few weeks, in order to be clear about a slogan for the elections (see report of June [*sic*-July] 24, A 2974). It is hoped that the period of political calm, which is expected to set in with the recess,** will create the conditions for drawing up a programme of negotiations which would have some prospects of bearing fruit.

Dirksen

From *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945*, Series D, Vol. VI, pp. 1033-1034.

No. 391. Letter from the German Ambassador in Britain to the State Secretary of the German Ministry for Foreign Affairs

August 1, 1939

Re: Anglo-German Relations

I inclose herewith copy of a minute made by Embassy Counsellor Kordt of a talk he had last Saturday with the Labour politician Mr. Charles Roden Buxton. Although Mr. Roden Buxton does

* A prominent member of the British Labour Party.

** The parliamentary recess.

not belong to the government party, and his ideas on foreign policy are contrary to those of the majority of the Labour Party, I nevertheless believe that what he said is deserving of some interest.¹³⁶ The term "spheres of interest," in the sense of a delimitation of the Grossräume of the chief Powers, was also used by Sir Horace Wilson in his talk with Herr Staatsrat Wohlthat.* It is further noteworthy that in his speech in the House of Commons yesterday Chamberlain—like Buxton—specifically referred to the Anglo-French agreement of 1904 and the Anglo-Russian treaty of 1907, although in another connection: the Prime Minister pointed out that nine months of negotiations were required in 1904, and fifteen months in 1907 before successful results were obtained. Chamberlain wanted thereby to take the sting out of the reproach that the negotiations with the Soviet Government were being excessively protracted.

Von Dirksen

Enclosure

MINUTE

Today, July 29, 1939, by previous arrangement, I was visited for a private talk by the former Labour Member of Parliament, Mr. Charles Roden Buxton, brother of the well-known Labour Peer, Lord Noel-Buxton. Mr. Roden Buxton, who at present has no mandate, is active in the Labour Party leadership in a post which may be compared with that of a leading General Staff officer in the Operations Department. He has a special office in the House of Commons and acts as political expert to the Labour Party. He and his wife became known in Germany owing to their courageous defence of the German civilian population during the French occupation of Upper Silesia and the Ruhr. Mr. Roden Buxton is a Quaker, and because of his knowledge of European problems and his excellent personal qualities enjoys a very good reputation even among his political opponents.

Mr. Roden Buxton began by saying that he was speaking neither on behalf of the Labour Party nor on behalf of the Government. He however wanted to let me know his views on the possibility, which in his opinion still existed, of avoiding a conflagration. He had arrived at the conviction that public discussion of means of preserving the peace could today no longer achieve its purpose. The nations were excited to such a pitch that any public attempt to arrive at a reasonable settlement would immediately be sabotaged. It would therefore be necessary to revert to a sort of secret diplomacy. Leading circles in Germany and Great Britain must endeavour to find a way out of the intolerable situation by conversations from which the public was totally excluded. He had in mind a way which

* See Document No. 379.

at one time, in 1904, had enabled Lord Lansdown* to break the tension with France, and which had also proved its value in 1907 in relieving the tension with Russia.

In 1904 and 1907 Britain had essentially been confronted with the same problems as today. From 1898 till 1904 France had taken advantage of every opportunity to create difficulties for the British Empire in all parts of the world, because she thought there was no way out of the existing strained situation except by acquiring as many allies as possible for the coming war. The negotiations which were begun, to the entire exclusion of the public, led to the agreement of 1904, by which France was assigned North-West Africa and Great Britain North-East Africa. Such too was the case in 1907. At that time Russia was trying to undermine the Empire in South Persia, Afghanistan and Thibet. Here again, by the agreement of 1907, the antagonisms were eliminated by means of the creation of spheres of interest.

He wondered whether it would not be possible to apply the same method today *vis-à-vis* Germany. The term Lebensraum coined by the Führer already pointed in this direction. Here I interrupted Mr. Roden Buxton to remark that British policy had done exactly the opposite. It had interfered in matters which in no way came within its spheres of interest. It had even given guarantees to States which did not need them, and it had instigated the Polish Government to an absolutely intransigent attitude toward reasonable German proposals. It was to be gathered from Mr. Roden Buxton's reply that, although he was a member of the Labour Party, he did not at all approve of this policy. That exactly was why he had come to see me. The antagonisms had become so acute that strictly speaking there was only one alternative: either war or a reasonable understanding. Mr. Roden Buxton then sketched the following plan:

Great Britain would express her willingness to conclude an agreement with Germany for a delimitation of spheres of interest. By delimitation of spheres of interest he meant, on the one hand, non-interference of other Powers in these spheres, and, on the other, a warrant to the beneficiary Great Power to prevent States situated in its sphere of interest from pursuing a policy hostile to it. In concrete application, this would mean:

- 1) Germany promises not to interfere in British Empire affairs.
- 2) Great Britain promises fully to respect the German spheres of interest in Eastern and Southeastern Europe. A consequence of this would be that Great Britain would renounce the guarantees she gave to certain States in the German sphere of interest. Great Britain further promises to influence France to break her alliance with the Soviet Union and to give up her ties in Southeastern Europe.

* British Secretary for Foreign Affairs (1900-05).

3) Great Britain promises to give up the present negotiations for a pact with the Soviet Union. Strangely enough, Mr. Roden Buxton also mentioned in this connection the dropping of the Czech-Soviet treaty.

In return for this, beside the afore-mentioned non-interference, Germany is to promise:

1) To proclaim her readiness for European co-operation (in this connection Mr. Roden Buxton expressed ideas similar to Mussolini's four-power pact);

2) To grant at a later stage some kind of autonomy to Bohemia and Moravia (I pointed out that this cultural autonomy already existed, after which Mr. Roden Buxton did not pursue the idea);

3) To agree to a general reduction of armaments. Such a reduction of armaments was in no case to be demanded one-sidedly of Germany; the thing to be achieved was to prevent all the nations from completely ruining themselves by expenditure on armaments. In reply to my question, Roden Buxton said that the armament potential of the States might remain the same, only on a lower level, just as if a family which had lived on the fifth floor of a modern apartment house were—in order to economize rent—to content itself with equal space on the second floor. Such a concession was essential to make it at all possible for Chamberlain and Lord Halifax to enter into reasonable and realistic negotiations with us.

It was obvious that such a far-reaching program, which would also settle the colonial question in a manner favourable to Germany, could only be discussed quite confidentially and in an atmosphere of improved confidence.

On the whole, I maintained the attitude of a listener, but in the end referred in an emphatic manner to the speeches of the Führer, who had long ago warned Britain not to interfere in matters which did not concern her.

In conclusion, I asked Mr. Roden Buxton whether he had discussed his ideas with members of the British Government. Mr. Roden Buxton evaded a direct answer. I believe however that it may be deduced from his rather roundabout statements that Sir Horace Wilson, and consequently Prime Minister Chamberlain also, are occupied with similar thoughts. It is not precluded that Mr. Roden Buxton wanted to put out a feeler. I however got the impression that Mr. Roden Buxton's views are based upon a thorough study of the matter.

Th. Kordt.

No. 392. TASS Statement on One of the Reasons for the Delay in Negotiations with Britain

August 2, 1939

According to press reports, in his speech in the House of Commons on July 31, Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Butler, said that the British Government was doing all it could to remove as quickly as possible existing differences of opinion between the USSR and England, the chief of which concerned the question whether we should encroach on the independence of the Baltic States. I agree, Mr. Butler is reported to have said, that we should not do so, and this difference of opinion is one of the main reasons why there has been a delay in the negotiations.

TASS is authorized to state that, if Mr. Butler really made the foregoing statement, he misrepresented the position of the Soviet Government. In actual fact the differences of opinion do not concern the question of encroaching or not encroaching upon the independence of the Baltic States, since both parties are in favour of guaranteeing that independence; they concern the question of leaving no loopholes in the formula about "indirect aggression" for an aggressor making an attempt to encroach on the independence of the Baltic States. One of the reasons for the delay in the negotiations is that the British formula leaves such a loophole for an aggressor.

From *Izvestia*, No. 177 (6947),
August 2, 1939.

**No. 393. Draft Definition of the Term "Indirect Aggression"
Handed by the Ambassadors of Britain and France in
the USSR to the People's Commissar for Foreign
Affairs of the USSR**

August 2, 1939

It is agreed between the three contracting Governments that the words "indirect aggression" in paragraph 2 above* are to be understood as not excluding (or as including) action accepted by the State in question under threat of force by another Power and involving the abandonment by it of its independence or neutrality.

In the event of circumstances arising which fell outside the framework of the foregoing definition but which, in the view of one of the

* See Document No. 375.

contracting Governments involved a threat to the independence or neutrality of the State in question, the contracting Governments will immediately consult together at the request of one of them with a view to such action as may be mutually agreed upon.¹³⁷

From the archives.

No. 394. Telegram from the Soviet Chargé d'Affaires in Germany to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the USSR

August 2, 1939

The French Chargé d'Affaires * informed me that people here are beginning to talk of the start of German troop movements in the direction of the eastern frontier, especially in Silesia. There will also be large shipment of troops (up to 15,500) to Eastern Prussia under the pretext of participation in the festivities to mark the liberation of Tannenberg. The Turkish Ambassador ** spoke of the construction of fortifications on the Slovak-Polish frontier. One can easily notice in Berlin and its environs the presence of all kinds of units which are not part of the local garrison. The English Counsellor *** expects that the Germans will abolish the Polish customs regulations in Danzig.

Chargé d'Affaires

From the archives.

No. 395. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in France to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the USSR

August 3, 1939

Yesterday I had a conversation with Mandel. He is not personally acquainted with any of the members of the Military Mission. He has heard that Doumenc **** is a leading expert on communications. He

* Saint-Hardouin.

** H. Arpag.

*** G. Ogilvie-Forbes.

**** Head of the French Military Mission at the negotiations between the Military Missions of the USSR, Britain and France in Moscow in 1939.

does not know what his political outlook is and, indeed, doubts whether he has one. He only knows that he was recommended by Gamelin. Mandel has information (not as a Cabinet member, for this matter was not discussed by the Cabinet) that the Mission is going to Moscow without a detailed plan. This gives rise to concern as to whether the negotiations can be of any substance. Mandel does not doubt that at present London and Paris (owing to the pressure of public opinion) want to avoid a breakdown of the talks, but there is no sign of any desire to achieve a serious agreement that should be put into effect immediately. As regards an agreement with the USSR it is the "particulars," such as assistance to Poland, Rumania and so forth, that are being talked about most of all. All these are of course necessary things, but this is not how the question of an alliance with the USSR should be approached at this time. The point of departure should be the undeniable fact that "a war with Germany is in fact already beginning, and is, in any case, unavoidable". This fact should be taken as the basis for the military negotiations and a clear and concrete plan of joint military operations should be devised with a precise distribution of roles in all conceivable situations. This is how Ribaud and Freycinet* had acted in their day when they sent a military mission to Russia; this is how Clémenceau** would have acted today, but Paris and London, it seems, intend to talk only about patching up things here and there.

The reasons for all this are to be found in the fact that here and in London hopes of coming to terms with Berlin have not yet been given up, and that an agreement with the USSR is seen not as a means of "breaking Germany," but only as a means of securing better bargaining positions in future talks with Germany. It is not surprising that the policy of glossing over the German danger, a line of lulling to sleep and of tranquilizing, is also being continued.

Meanwhile the situation is becoming more and more dangerous with every passing day. According to all available information, Hitler is preparing for a new attack. At present troops are being concentrated simultaneously in Slovakia and in the Freistadt-Glagau-Daaro region (where motorized troops numbering about 200,000 men have already been concentrated). If you add to this the information on mobilization throughout the country and the gradual conversion of Danzig into a fortified military area, a powerful strike against Poland may be expected in the near future.

Even now Hitler will, most likely, try to avoid an open war and will again play on "weak nerves" and confront Europe with a new crisis. And is this game quite hopeless at the present time? Mandel has been hearing from all quarters that Poland "is not Czechoslovakia," that Poland will fight and so on. But why then is Poland tolerating all that is happening in Danzig? Some say that France and England are no longer what they used to be. Of course, a great change has occurred in these countries, but it is not accidental that Déat's¹³⁸

* French statesmen of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

** French statesman of the early 20th century.

articles are appearing; nor is there anything fortuitous about a "conversation" such as the one in London between Wohlthat and Hudson,* or about the concessions, or the fact that the majority of the French Socialist Party have not yet given up their pacifist illusions. All this makes one fear that Hitler's game is not all that hopeless. "The thing to be feared most of all," Mandel emphasized, "is that the game might start before agreement is reached in Moscow."

Ambassador

From the archives.

No. 396. Memorandum of a Conversation Between the German Ambassador in Britain and the Chief Industrial Adviser to the British Government

August 3, 1939

I

After it was ascertained in Herr Kordt's conversation with Mr. Butler that Sir Horace Wilson in supplement to his conversation with Herr Wohlthat* would very much like to have a talk with me, it was arranged that I should visit him today at his home at 4 o'clock. The conversation took place and lasted nearly two hours.

II

I set worth on having Sir Horace Wilson confirm the notes which I had made on the basis of my talks with Herr Wohlthat regarding his conversations with Sir Horace Wilson. It seemed to me essential to have this corroboration in order that there might be full clarity on these important points, all the more that since Hudson's indiscretion a new campaign had been started against Chamberlain's appeasement policy. It appeared that the basis of the Wohlthat-Wilson conversation remained in force. Sir Horace Wilson confirmed that he had suggested to Herr Wohlthat the following programme of negotiations:

1) Conclusion of a treaty of "non-aggression," in which both Sides would obligate themselves to renounce unilateral aggressive action as a method of their policy. The inherent intention of the British Government regarding this point was explained to me by Sir Horace Wilson when in the course of the conversation I asked how agree-

* See Document No. 383.

ment with Germany could be reconciled with the British Government's encirclement policy. To this he replied that an Anglo-German agreement involving renunciation of aggression *vis-à-vis* third Powers would completely absolve the British Government from the commitments to which it was now pledged by the guarantees to Poland, Turkey, etc.; these commitments were assumed only against the event of attack, and were so formulated. With the removal of the danger the commitments would also cease to be operative.

2) An Anglo-German declaration to the effect that both Powers wanted to ease (improve) * the political situation, in order to make it possible to co-operate in improving the world economic situation.

3) Negotiations with a view to increasing foreign trade.

4) Negotiations regarding Germany's economic interests in the Southeast.

5) Negotiations regarding raw materials. Sir Horace Wilson stressed that this was to include the colonial question. It was not expedient at the present moment to go deeper into this matter, for it was a very delicate question. It was enough to stipulate that the colonial question would be discussed.

6) A non-intervention agreement. Sir Horace Wilson said that the declaration required from the German Side was already contained in the Führer's speech of April 28. The English Side would be prepared to make a declaration of non-intervention in respect to Greater Germany (Greater Reich). ** This would embrace the Danzig question, for example. Sir Horace Wilson avoided being as explicit regarding Germany's sphere of interest as he had been in his conversation with Herr Wohlthat, or as Mr. Roden Buxton had been in his conversation with Herr Kordt, although it was to be gathered from what he said that the German demand could be discussed in connection with this point of the program.

7) Armaments. On this point Sir Horace Wilson said that he wanted to make it quite clear that it was not disarmament that was meant, but negotiations regarding armaments in general. It was apparent from the further course of the conversation that he was well aware of the difficulties that would attend any agreement for limitation of armaments, as well as of the fact that it would take years to get going and become effective.

8) I took advantage of this opportunity to ask Sir Horace Wilson to tell me how the newspaper rumours that Mr. Hudson had held out the prospect of a big "disarmament loan" had originated, since Herr Wohlthat had made no mention of it to me. Sir Horace Wilson said that it had been often discussed how the financial and economic difficulties which it was to be feared might attend armament limitation could be overcome. Hudson had perhaps seized upon this idea and enlarged upon it. But the question was now closed and was no longer being considered. He personally believed that in that event *** there

* In the German text the word in parentheses, "improve", is in English.

** The words in parentheses, "Greater Reich," are in English.

*** In the event of disarmament, presumably.

would be a period of 3-6 months in which financial difficulties would arise, but chiefly in the sphere of currency technique.

III

After recapitulating his conversation with Wohlthat, Sir Horace Wilson expatiated at length on the great risk Chamberlain would incur by starting confidential negotiations with the German Government. If anything about them were to leak out there would be a grand scandal, and Chamberlain would probably be forced to resign. Labour Member Dalton had already referred in the House of Commons yesterday to the rumours that Chamberlain was making new "appeasement moves," and he, Wilson, had himself just received an anonymous letter warning him and Chamberlain against such manoeuvres.

When I questioned whether in general, in view of the prevailing state of feeling—everyone who came out in favour of adjustment with Germany was regarded as a traitor and branded as such—it was possible for a British Government to arrive at any binding agreements with Germany, Sir Horace Wilson replied that it was possible, but that it would require all the skill of the British persons involved not to come to grief in the attempt. Above all, the greatest secrecy was necessary at the present stage. The question was, how and in what form the public were later to be informed of the Government's plans. Here Wilson pointed out that in England—whether rightly or wrongly he would not say—confidence in Germany and her peaceful intentions had been shattered; the thing above all was to convince the British public that confidence was warranted. Then there was the fear that in the next few weeks or months developments might occur which would precipitate a new crisis. The British Government had information that two million German troops were shortly to be called to the colours; that manoeuvres menacing to Poland, with the participation of large numbers of aircraft, were to be held on the Polish frontier; bearing further in mind the statement recently made by Reichsminister Goebbels regarding the continuation of the war of nerves, a situation might arise in which further negotiations would have little prospect of success. There would be no sense in negotiating for an adjustment if another dangerous crisis was to be expected. It had to be admitted that it was a sort of vicious circle: on the one hand, the public could not be reassured by announcing that negotiations were in prospect (because that would jeopardize the negotiations), and, on the other, the German side declined to make reassuring declarations before they had a clear picture regarding the negotiations. It was difficult, because of Britain's democratic constitution, for Chamberlain to come out publicly with a conciliatory statement, for then he and the Cabinet would probably be forced to resign. The vicious circle could therefore perhaps be more easily broken if the Führer, who had no political attacks to fear at home, took the initiative and himself made such a conciliatory statement. He could do

this all the more because he was not only a great, but also a successful statesman who, in the knowledge of his strength and achievements, could say the word without endangering his prestige or fearing internal upheavals.

I replied to this that the extensive manoeuvres projected by Germany were by no means comparable to the military measures of other Powers: in the past four months the Poles had mobilized a million men and were standing on our frontiers (Sir Horace questioned whether the number was so large, but offered no objection to the figure 900,000); Britain's armed forces, land, naval and air, were more or less mobilized; France had taken comprehensive mobilization measures. It was therefore impossible to expect us to reverse our measures or to cancel the manoeuvres.

Sir Horace Wilson protested that he had not had this in mind; there were however substantially different ways of holding manoeuvres: they could be arranged in such a manner as to lead the other Side to regard them as a direct threat and challenge, or they could be arranged as ordinary peacetime manoeuvres.

I went on to say that on the question of deceived confidence our view entirely differed from the British; at any rate, it was a fact that it had been the aim of British policy in the past months to build up a regular world coalition against Germany, and that to this day it was preparing the individual members of the coalition financially and militarily for eventual action against Germany. We must know for certain how the British Government reconciled this policy with the possibility of an adjustment with Germany. The Führer would certainly not consider making pacifying or friendly declarations unless he knew what attitude he could expect from the British Side toward Germany's justified demands.

In reply to this Sir Horace Wilson made the statement already mentioned regarding the British encirclement policy, that it would become inoperative if a treaty of non-aggression were concluded with Germany. As to the question of how far the Führer must be certain concerning the concessions the British Side were to make before he, so to speak, could hold out the palm of peace, here too the difficulty was that there must first be concrete results; it must however be a certain assurance to the German Side that they definitely know what the programme of negotiations is to be; the British Side were prepared to discuss all points proposed by the German Side. How far agreement would be possible it was still too early to say.

The conversation then turned on the question, in what form the talks begun with Herr Wohlthat should be continued, assuming there was the desire on the German Side to continue them. Sir Horace Wilson said that it would be a severe disappointment to the British Side if we did not take up the thread. In that case there would be nothing left but to drive to disaster (heading on to the catastrophe).*

* In the German text the words in parentheses are in English.

It would therefore be of great interest to him to know how his conversation with Wohlthat was received in Berlin.

I replied that I could tell him nothing definitely on this score. I myself could not clearly picture how, from the purely technical aspect, the continuation of the conversations was possible; for example, owing to Hudson's indiscretion, another visit of Herr Wohlthat to London was out of the question.

Sir Horace Wilson believed that a way could be found; it could be discussed when the time came. Probably the two emissaries could meet in Switzerland or elsewhere.

IV

From the conversation sketched above there gradually emerged certain definite points, which Sir Horace Wilson summarized as follows:

1) What instructions has the Führer given respecting further action on the Wohlthat report, and what are the views of the German Government regarding the next steps that ought to be taken?

2) Will it be possible for the Führer, as far as it depends upon him, so to determine developments in the next few weeks as not to lead to any exacerbation of the situation?

3) Assuming that the problem and the individual points to be discussed have been determined, how could the Führer make known his decision to take the initiative in creating an atmosphere in which the negotiations programme could be discussed with prospect of success?

To my question, what was the British preliminary contribution which justified such a preliminary contribution from the German Side, Sir Horace Wilson replied that the British Government had manifested its good will and initiative by discussing the afore-mentioned points with Herr Wohlthat and had thereby made known to the German Government its readiness to negotiate.

It was to be inferred from all that Sir Horace Wilson said that he regarded the programme of negotiations he had suggested to Herr Wohlthat, and now confirmed to me, as an official British feeler, to which a German reply was now expected. It was quite clear that the British Side are deeply concerned about the difficult predicament in which the British Government finds itself, that is, into which it has manoeuvred itself. On the one hand, there is the excited state of public opinion which it has whipped up against Germany by its policy and agitation, and, on the other, there is the wish, by means of an adjustment with Germany, to avoid war, which otherwise is regarded as inevitable. The concern that this may damage its encirclement policy seemed to me to hold a secondary place; the dominant feeling was that, compared with an effective adjustment with Germany, the ties that had been formed in the last few months with other Powers were only a subsidiary means, which would cease to be operative as

soon as agreement with Germany, the all-important objective worth striving for, had been really attained. The bringing in of France and Italy likewise played a secondary role in the conversation. Sir Horace Wilson said casually that the agreement should be made between Germany and Britain, and that, naturally, if it were thought desirable, Italy and France could be brought in.¹³⁹

Von Dirksen

From *Documents and Materials Relating to the Eve of the Second World War*, Vol. II, *Dirksen Papers (1938-1939)*, Moscow, 1948.

No. 397. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in France to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the USSR

August 4, 1939

When seeing off the French military delegation at the station I had a brief talk with General Valin * (Doumenc was not there—he is joining the delegation at some point along the way). Valin told me that the news of our having appointed such a high-powered delegation, headed by Voroshilov himself, had made a big and highly gratifying impression here. This fact was also noted by Pertinax who drove back with me from the station, and who regretted that Gamelin was not heading the French mission. One's first feeling is that the French mission, made up of little-known men, does not look too impressive. Besides Doumenc, there is not a single name known outside a narrow circle of experts.

Ambassador

From the archives.

No. 398. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in France to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the USSR

August 4, 1939

Addition to the immediately preceding telegram.

Commandant Krebs * is probably known to you, since he was on a

* Member of the French Military Mission which took part in the negotiations between the Military Missions of the USSR, Britain and France in Moscow in 1939.

training assignment in the USSR. He is an instructor and expert in artillery. He has an excellent knowledge of Russian and will probably be responsible for liaison with our delegation.

In addition to what I have already reported about Doumenc, Per-tinax told me that Doumenc, being a lively man and somewhat hot-headed, is noted for great perseverance and industriousness. He is a graduate of a polytechnical school. During the war, together with Girard,* he organized the army motor transport service. Subsequently he dealt mainly with problems of army motorization. It is for his role in this matter that he was promoted to the highest posts. It is far more difficult to say what his political outlook is.

If Odent is to be believed, Doumenc was not particularly pleased with the instructions he was given at the Quai d'Orsay prior to his departure. "Nothing clear or definite." "They let him go with nothing more than general and stereotyped phrases and remarks." The impression is that the English will be at the helm of both military and political negotiations.

Ambassador

From the archives.

No. 399. Memorandum of a Conversation Between the Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR and the Ambassadors of Britain and France in the USSR

August 5, 1939

The two Ambassadors came to see me together. They posed the following questions:

1. How would the official presentation of the Military Missions arriving in Moscow take place?

Seeds and Naggiar felt that they should themselves present the arriving military men to whoever was to receive them. Both Ambassadors believed that Comrade Voroshilov would probably wish to meet the members of the Missions before the start of the talks. Seeds and Naggiar would like to know whether Comrade Voroshilov would consider it possible to receive all the military delegates or whether he would receive only the principals. In either case, the Ambassadors believed, the French and the English should present themselves together.

Seeds and Naggiar also wanted to know whether the members of the English and French Military Missions could count on being presented to Comrade Molotov. If it was felt that this would be possible, the Ambassadors would call on Comrade Molotov with their military representatives.

* French military leader during the First World War.

I told Seeds and Naggiar that I would refer their questions to Comrade Molotov and Comrade Voroshilov, and that on receipt of a reply I would notify the Ambassadors of the decision that had been taken.

2. Seeds and Naggiar made it known that the military Attachés of their Embassies would be involved in the work of the Military Missions in Moscow. The two Ambassadors would like to know whether these Attachés could be included in the official list of participants in the Missions or whether the heads of Missions would be entitled to summon their Attachés to participate in the work whenever required.

I replied that I would ask for Comrade Voroshilov's opinion on this.

Before departing, Seeds told me that Strang had been recalled to London and that further negotiations on the political articles of the Treaty would take place without him. It seemed to me that Seeds spoke of this without displeasure. He emphasized that Strang was primarily skilled as a technician in negotiations and in drafting texts. It was possible, in the Ambassador's opinion, that Strang had been summoned to London to receive a promotion.

Naggiar added, in his turn, that what remained at issue concerning the political part of the Treaty was the question of indirect aggression. The Ambassador felt that a precise definition of this concept was very difficult.¹³⁷ In any event, he preferred that it should not appear in the text of Article 1 but should be transferred to the supplementary secret protocol. For that matter, even in that document it would be best of all not to look for a comprehensive formula but to be content with a definition clarified by several concrete examples. In taking their leave, the Ambassadors expressed the hope that after the weekend they would receive my answers to the questions they had raised.

V. Potemkin

From the archives.

No. 400. Mandate of the Head of the Soviet Delegation for the Conduct of Negotiations and the Signing of a Convention on Questions of Organizing the Military Defence of Britain, France and the USSR Against Aggression in Europe

August 5, 1939

People's Commissar for Defence of the USSR, Marshal of the Soviet Union K. Y. Voroshilov, Head of the Soviet Military Delegation,

which includes the Chief of the General Staff of the Red Army, Army Commander I B. M. Shaposhnikov, People's Commissar for the Navy, Fleet Commander II N. G. Kuznetsov, Chief of the Red Army Air Force, Army Commander II A. D. Loktionov, and Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the Red Army, Corps Commander I. V. Smorodinov, is empowered to conduct negotiations with the British and French Military Missions and to sign a military Convention on questions pertaining to the organization of the military defence of Britain, France and the USSR against aggression in Europe.¹⁴⁰

Chairman of the Council of People's
Commissars of the USSR *V. Molotov*

Business Manager of the Council of
People's Commissars of the USSR
M. Khlomov

From the archives.

No. 401. The Japanese Refuse to Calm Down (TASS Communique)

August 6, 1939

According to a report issued by the Headquarters of the Mongolian-Soviet forces in the MPR, from July 26 to August 5 the Mongolian-Soviet forces have been in firm control of the area to the east of the Khalkhin Gol river while in battle contact with the Japano-Manchurian forces. Repeated attempts by the Japano-Manchurians to attack the Mongolian-Soviet forces and drive a wedge into their positions were repulsed with artillery and machine-gun fire, with the Japano-Manchurian forces sustaining heavy losses.

Throughout these days there have been several air battles. On July 28 the Mongolian-Soviet air force destroyed five Japanese aircraft in one air attack, without losing a single aircraft of its own.

The Japanese air force was especially active on July 29. On that day, in several air battles over the territory of the MPR, the Japanese lost 32 aircraft. On the same day the Mongolian-Soviet air force shot down and captured two Japanese airmen, Fikuji Takio and Sub-Lieutenant Tabuchi. Four airmen of the Mongolian-Soviet air force failed to return; a search for them is continuing.

On July 31 there were several air battles in which Mongolian-Soviet aircraft shot down five Japanese fighters. One aircraft of the Mongolian-Soviet air force failed to return.

On August 1 Japanese bombers intruded into the territory of the MPR, but, met by Mongolian-Soviet fighters and anti-aircraft fire,

without accepting battle or dropping any bombs, they withdrew to their own territory, losing two aircraft which were shot down by pursuing Mongolian-Soviet fighters. One airman of the Mongolian-Soviet air force was slightly wounded but returned safely to base. In the afternoon of August 1 Japanese bombers again attempted to attack the positions of Mongolian-Soviet forces but were driven off by anti-aircraft fire and fighter planes.

At 8 a.m. on August 2 Mongolian-Soviet aircraft bombed an enemy aerodrome and destroyed eight Japanese aircraft, shooting down another three aircraft as they were taking off. The Mongolian-Soviet air force sustained no losses.

On August 3 Japanese bombers escorted by fighters attempted to attack the Mongolian-Soviet forces, but, met by Mongolian-Soviet fighters, they withdrew to Manchurian territory, losing two bombers which were shot down and fell on the territory of the MPR.

On August 4 there were two air battles over the territory of the MPR between Japanese fighters and bombers and Mongolian-Soviet aircraft. In these battles ten Japanese aircraft were shot down. One aircraft of the Mongolian-Soviet air force failed to return to base.

From *Izvestia*, No. 181 (6951),
August 6, 1939.

No. 402. Memorandum of a Conversation Between a German Journalist and the German Air Attaché in Poland

August 7, 1939

On August 7, 1939, Colonel Gerstenberg asked me to call on him and to give him a brief account of current political events. He then said the following:

On August 5 and 6 I was in Berlin. The decision has now been taken. As early as this year we will be at war with Poland. From an absolutely reliable source I have learned that Hitler has taken such a decision. After Wohlthat's visit to London * Hitler is convinced that in the event of a conflict England will remain neutral. The negotiations of the Western Powers with Moscow are not proceeding in our favour. But for Hitler even this is one more argument in favour of speeding up action against Poland. Hitler is saying to himself that at present England, France and the Soviet Union have not yet come to

* See Document No. 383.

gether; to reach agreement between the General Staffs the participants in the Moscow negotiations will need much time; therefore Germany should strike the first blow before this happens. The deployment of German forces against Poland and the concentration of the necessary equipment will be completed between August 15 and 20. After August 25 a start of military action against Poland is to be expected.

From the archives.

No. 403. Telegram from the Soviet Chargé d'Affaires in Germany to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the USSR

August 7, 1939

Foreign journalists have been writing about various sensational details which bear witness to imminent German mobilization aimed at seizing Danzig and the former "German" Poland. It would hardly be surprising if the Germans should precipitate a showdown in this sector.

Chargé d'Affaires

From the archives.

No. 404. Telegram from the US Chargé d'Affaires in Britain to the US Secretary of State

August 8, 1939

The Foreign Office sees no hope of an early termination of the Anglo-French-Russian negotiations for a political agreement and the military mission which has now left for Moscow has been told to make every effort to prolong its discussions until October 1. Negotiations by the Ambassador for a political agreement which hangs almost entirely on the question of "indirect aggression"¹³⁷ are to continue simultaneously.

Johnson

From *Foreign Relations of the United States. Diplomatic Papers. 1939, Vol. I, Washington, 1956, p. 294.*

No. 405. Telegram from the Soviet Chargé d'Affaires in Germany to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the USSR

August 9, 1939

As the campaign over Danzig is being stepped up, tensions here are mounting. This is felt both in the press and in conversations with diplomats whom I met today at the Bolivian Minister's reception. The situation is being compared to last year's pre-Munich period. The Germans are openly spreading rumours (true, through non-responsible channels) that Poland is going to be dealt with within a matter of days, and it is asserted that England will not intervene.

Chargé d'Affaires

From the archives.

No. 406. Letter from the German Ambassador in the USSR to the German Foreign Ministry

August 10, 1939

Subject: The Polish attitude to the pact negotiations between France, Britain and the Soviet Union.

The Polish Ambassador here, Grzybowski, returned from leave at the beginning of August. In a talk between him and the Italian Ambassador, Rosso, the conversation also turned to the pact negotiations between Britain, France and Russia. The Italian Ambassador said he thought that the military discussions now beginning could only produce real results if Poland were associated with them in some way or other, or at least agreed to accept armed assistance from the Soviet Union. To this the Polish Ambassador replied that Poland's attitude to the pact negotiations remained unchanged. Poland would in no circumstances allow Soviet troops to set foot on Polish territory, even if only in transit. When the Italian Ambassador remarked that that presumably did not apply to Soviet aircraft, the Polish Ambassador stated that Poland would in no circumstances place airfields at the disposal of the Soviet air force.

Count von der Schulenburg

From *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945, Series D, Vol. VII, p. 13.*

No. 407. Letter from the German Minister in Yugoslavia to the German Foreign Ministry

Bled, August 10, 1939

S u b j e c t: The return of the Prince Regent from London.

The Prince Regent arrived back at Schloss Bordo, near Bled, a few days ago. At the same time Princess Olga's brother-in-law, the Duke of Kent, arrived with his wife on a visit.

As the Foreign Minister told me, the Prince Regent is at present still confined to bed as a result of a rather serious operation on his jaw which he had to undergo in London. Cinkar-Marković again assured me that the Prince Regent's visit to England took place for purely private reasons and had no political background whatever. Nor, in fact, had anyone in England tried to influence him with a view to changing Yugoslav policy. From his talks with Chamberlain and Halifax, moreover, the Prince Regent had gained the definite impression that these two British statesmen at least still desired a friendly settlement with Germany. It was true that the whole of Britain today was suffering from a state of war nerves in that the opinion prevailed everywhere that British prestige could in no circumstances submit to another withdrawal in the face of unilateral use of force by the totalitarian States. The Prince Regent's impression, however, was that in case of friendly negotiations, both Chamberlain and Halifax would be prepared to make considerable concessions. The Prince Regent had naturally made efforts to encourage this tendency as far as possible, profiting by the impressions he had gained in Berlin.

von Heeren

From Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945, Series D, Vol. VII, p. 17.

No. 408. Telegram from the Soviet Air Attaché in Britain to the General Staff of the Red Army

August 12, 1939

According to verified information, Germany is carrying out war preparations which are due to be completed by August 15. The call-up of reservists and the formation of reserve units are proceeding on a large scale and under cover.

On August 15 the "Spannung" order is expected to be issued throughout Germany. These are very serious mobilization measures.

In preparation is a strike against Poland by units of the 1st army: the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 8th, 13th, 17th and 18th Army Corps and Armour-

ed Divisions, all oriented eastwards. Only defensive measures are being taken in the west.

German military circles are anticipating that Poland will be offered another chance to reach a peaceful settlement. In any event, it has been decided to resolve the question this year.

I. Cherny

From the archives.

No. 409. From Memorandum of a Conversation Between the German Reich Chancellor and the Italian Foreign Minister

August 12, 1939

[...] The Führer replied that no time should be lost in solving the Polish problem. The further autumn advanced, the more difficult military operations in Eastern Europe would become. Because of the weather conditions, very little use could be made of the Luftwaffe in these territories from the middle of September, while it would also be impossible to employ motorized forces owing to the state of the roads, which rapidly became a morass after the rains which start in the autumn. From September to May, Poland was one vast swamp and completely unsuitable for any military operations. Thus Poland could simply occupy Danzig in October—and she probably intended to do so—without Germany being able to do anything at all to prevent it; for there was naturally no question of bombing and destroying Danzig.

Count Ciano asked by what date the Führer thought the Danzig question would have to be settled. The Führer replied that this settlement would have to be made one way or the other by the end of August. In reply to Ciano's question as to what solution the Führer envisaged, the latter said that Poland must give up Danzig politically, but that at the same time her economic interests would naturally be safeguarded, and that, furthermore, she must also by her general attitude contribute towards removing the tension. He doubted whether Poland would be prepared to do this, for hitherto she had rejected Germany's proposals. The Führer had personally made these proposals to Beck on the occasion of the latter's visit to Obersalzberg.* They had been extremely favourable to Poland. In exchange for the political return of Danzig to Germany, with full preservation of Polish economic interests, and the establishment of a link between East Prussia and the Reich, Germany had promised a frontier guarantee, a

* See Document No. 87.

twenty-five-year pact of friendship, and that Poland should have a share in influence on Slovakia. At the time Beck had taken cognizance of the proposal with the remark that he would study it. The brusque rejection of this had come only as a consequence of English intervention. What Poland's other objectives were could be seen quite clearly from the press. The whole of East Prussia was to be taken, it was intended to advance as far as Berlin, etc. It was unbearable for a Great Power to have to tolerate perpetually such a hostile neighbour only 150 kilometres from her capital. The Führer was therefore determined to utilize the opportunity provided by the next act of political provocation—be it in the form of an ultimatum, brutal maltreatment of Germans in Poland, an attempt to starve Danzig out, an entry of Polish troops into Danzig territory, or anything of that kind—to attack Poland within forty-eight hours and solve the problem in that way. This would constitute a considerable strengthening of the Axis, just as the liquidation of Yugoslavia by Italy would constitute a considerable increase in Axis power.

Count Ciano asked when such an operation against Poland was to be expected, since Italy would naturally have to be prepared for all eventualities. The Führer replied that in the present circumstances a move against Poland must be expected at any moment.¹⁴¹ [..]

From *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945*, Series D, Vol. VII, pp. 39, 47-48.

No. 410. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in France to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the USSR

August 12, 1939

From news agency dispatches you are probably aware that several days ago the Fournier News Agency reported from Warsaw that the other day Ribbentrop and Bonnet had exchanged letters on the Danzig question, and that Ribbentrop had allegedly denied France's right to intervene in Danzig affairs. From the subsequent Quai d'Orsay *démenti* it became clear that there had in fact been an exchange of views, though it took place not now but back in early July. * Some information on what was said in that exchange of views has already been leaked to the press. It all began with the proposal Bonnet made to Welczeck¹³¹ on July 1 to start an exchange of views on Danzig

* See Document No. 370.

on the basis of the procedures provided for in the Franco-German Agreement of December 6.*

This proposal was accompanied by a declaration to the effect that in the event of an attack on Poland France would support her without hesitation. In his letter of reply Ribbentrop rejected the need for such exchange of views and (this is the point) argued that, as both he and the German Government saw it, the very essence of last December's Paris Agreement lay "in France's renunciation of her interest in the affairs of Eastern Europe". There followed an angry protest from Bonnet, but there are no doubts in anyone's mind that Bonnet himself, through his private conversations with Ribbentrop, had given the latter sufficient grounds for such a conclusion. Ribbentrop had merely confirmed our last year's suspicion as to the true nature of the agreement then concluded ("a free hand in the East"). Yesterday Bonnet gave me a glossed-over version of the story of this correspondence. He laid particular emphasis on the firmness he had displayed in respect of Danzig. He asserted that some time ago he had already told me about the July exchange of views. But this is only a half-truth. He had told me only of his declaration of unconditional support for Poland, but he had concealed Ribbentrop's reply. The whole story has proved irritating to Bonnet. It is believed that it has been deliberately launched from Warsaw so as to compel the French yet again to speak out on the Danzig question.

Ambassador

From the archives.

No. 411. Record of the Meeting of the Military Missions of the USSR, Britain and France¹⁴²

*August 12, 1939
Opened at 11.30 a.m.*

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: Gentlemen, I think it best that we should first settle procedural matters, that is, fix our days and hours of work. Then, I think, it would be right to establish the order of chairmanship; we shall obviously need a chairman. It seems advisable to me that the heads of Missions should preside in rotation, with the head of one Mission in the chair one day, the head of another the next, and so on.

Furthermore, I think we should decide what we are going to call the sittings of the Military Missions of Britain, France and the USSR. I expect it would be right to call them meetings.

* See Document No. 64.

After a brief exchange of [opinions] the heads of the British and French Missions consent to the proposed order of chairmanship and agree to call the sittings of the Military Missions meetings.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: What do you propose in regard to the days and hours of our meetings?

The French Mission suggests holding two meetings each day. The British Mission has no objection.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: Our Mission consents to having meetings every day—two sessions each day.

The British and French Missions jointly propose to hold the morning session from 10.30 a.m. to 1.30 p.m. and the evening session from 5.30 p.m. to 7 p.m.

The proposal is accepted.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV suggests that the Missions decide who should take the chair today and how many sessions should be held—two or one.

After an exchange of opinions the British and French Missions suggest holding one meeting today and that the head of the Soviet Mission, Marshal Voroshilov, should preside.

The proposal is accepted.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: I declare the meeting of the Military Missions of Britain, France and the Soviet Union open. I presume that there is no need for any speeches and suggest that we get down to the business in hand.

I think that we must first settle the following question. First. Do the British and French Missions think that we must keep our meetings secret?

After an exchange of opinions Admiral Drax * and General Doumenc say that the meetings must be kept secret and that all communications which the conference sees fit to issue to the press shall be mutually agreed by all three Missions.

The Soviet Mission accepts this proposal.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: A second question—I should like to know whether we are going to keep minutes of the results of our meetings. I personally think that there is no need to keep minutes of speeches and statements, since we have decided to keep the meetings secret, and to record only the decisions if any are reached. We shall put down what is said whenever there is need for it. I suggest that each delegation keep its own records in its own language. One more point of procedure. I think that all the statements of the British, French and Soviet delegates should be translated by their own interpreters—French statements by the French interpreter, British by the British, and Soviet by the Soviet interpreter.

After an exchange of opinions Marshal Voroshilov's proposal to keep minutes of adopted decisions only, and the proposal on interpreting procedure are both accepted.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: Now that all points of procedure have

* The head of the British Military Mission.

been settled, we could start discussing the essentials. But it is only natural that before starting the discussion we should first familiarize each other with whatever written powers we have, authorizing us to discuss the range of questions we have in mind. I herewith present the mandate empowering my associates and myself to conduct negotiations and sign a military Convention should we reach final agreement on questions of interest to us. I ask you, Admiral Drax, and you, General Doumenc, to acquaint us with your powers and to show us your mandates. I suggest that all available written powers should be translated into the languages of the Missions. I shall read my mandate in Russian.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV reads the text of his mandate, * which is then translated into French and English.

GENERAL DOUMENC presents his Ordre de service.

ADMIRAL DRAX states that he has no written powers; he is authorized to negotiate, but not to sign a Pact (Convention).

Asked a second time by Marshal Voroshilov whether he has any written powers at all, Admiral Drax says that he understands his powers have been made known to the Soviet Mission by the British Embassy, but that he has no written powers with him. If necessary, he will present written powers as soon as possible.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: You realize, I'm sure, that we do not doubt that you represent the interests of your countries, and, in particular, that the British Mission represents the British Army, Navy and Air Force, and the French Mission represents the French Army, Navy and Air Force. But in my opinion we need written powers in order that we may all know within what limits you are empowered to negotiate, what questions you can deal with, to what extent you are competent to discuss them, and to what result these negotiations may lead. Our powers, as you see, are all-embracing. We can negotiate matters concerning the defence of Britain, France and the USSR against the European aggressive countries, and we can sign a military Convention. Your powers, outlined verbally, are not entirely clear to me. In any case, it seems to me that the question is not an idle one; it determines from the outset the order and form of our negotiations.

ADMIRAL DRAX points out that the Soviet Mission has the advantage of being able to communicate directly with its Government. He says further that if it were convenient to transfer the negotiations to London he would be given full powers, but that in view of the great distance from London he cannot sign a Convention until it has been seen by his Government.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV remarks amid general laughter that bringing papers from London to Moscow is easier than for so big a company to go to London.

* See Document No. 400.

ADMIRAL DRAX says that he does not think the absence of powers should stand in the way of the negotiations and that no precedent existed of a Military Mission's being empowered to sign a Convention without preliminary approval by the Government. This applied to Britain's negotiations with Turkey and Poland.

GENERAL DOUMENC reads his powers, the text of which amounts to the following:

"The President of the Council [of Ministers], Minister of National Defence and of War appoints Member of the Supreme War Council General Doumenc to head the Military Mission sent to the USSR, and empowers him to come to an agreement with the Supreme Command of the Soviet Armed Forces on all questions pertaining to co-operation between the armed forces of both countries."

(Taken down from the translation given by the interpreter of the French Mission).

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: I take it that our Mission is ready to note the statement of the head of the British Mission, Admiral Drax, to the effect that he will present his missing written powers in due time and that this circumstance should not delay the opening of our discussions of the essential issues.

ADMIRAL DRAX declares that he is gratified by the statement of the head of the Soviet Mission.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: Now I should like to ask the head of the British Mission, Admiral Drax, and the head of the French Mission, General Doumenc, to state their proposals concerning the measures which, in their opinion, would best serve to organize the defence of the contracting parties, that is, Britain, France and the Soviet Union. Have the Missions of Britain and France military plans to put forward in this connection?

ADMIRAL DRAX replies that he expected the draft to be proposed by the Soviet Mission, since he has come here at the invitation of the Soviet Government.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: We have a sketchy kind of plan, but we think that each Mission must have its own proposals. This is why we are very much interested in your plans. Our Government invited the Military Missions of Britain and France in the hope that the British General Staff, and the French as well, have often discussed these questions and that they have these plans. All the more so, our conference was preceded by political negotiations begun on Britain's proposal. For this reason, the matter could not, naturally, have been lost sight of either by the British or the French Government.

ADMIRAL DRAX says that, naturally, his Mission has a plan, but a very general one, since the Mission's departure had been hurried. We do not have a precise plan (Admiral Drax added). Germany has two million men under arms and plans to open hostilities on August 15. We have come to Moscow in the hope of discussing a detailed plan.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: Our Mission does not claim to have a military plan worked out in every detail. We consider, however, that it would be beneficial and absolutely proper, or, if you like, fair, for the British and French Missions to submit whatever plan they have of defending the three contracting Powers from aggression in Europe. The Soviet Union is in a somewhat different position to Britain and France. It does not have a common frontier in the West with countries of the aggressive bloc, and hence cannot be the first object of attack. In the case of Britain and France, however, and the countries with which they have concluded Pacts, they border immediately upon the countries of the aggressive bloc and obviously it is you in the first place who should have plans against possible armed attacks by the aggressors. We do not know your plans. It is difficult for us to come out with our own plan, until we have at least a rough plan of the British and French military organization [of defence], and of the military organization of [defence of] the countries with which you have treaties [on] resisting the aggressor. This is why I ask you to prepare a communication about your plans for tomorrow morning's meeting, if not for today, so we could discuss it. We are prepared, in our turn, to produce our plans, but I repeat that they, too, do not claim to be comprehensive and precise.

After a lengthy exchange of opinions between the British and French Missions ADMIRAL DRAX says: As you have pointed out, your plan may not be perfect from our point of view. [But] we are prepared to study it however; we attach the greatest importance to two questions:

1. The possibility of Germany conducting a war [sic] on two fronts.
2. Direct communications between the Soviet Armed Forces and those of the other countries, that is, Britain and France.

If we could come to an agreement on these two items much would have been achieved.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: You agree that we should discuss or acquaint each other at first with the plans which the British and French Missions have (one or two plans), and then with our plan, and then go on to discuss all the other questions which, despite their importance, are only elements of the plan itself.

It seems to me that we must first look into your plans, then into ours, and then discuss the questions you have mentioned, that is, the question of a possible war on two fronts and then the question of the physical connections between the Armed Forces of the Soviet Union and those of France and Britain.

ADMIRAL DRAX says that he is very pleased with the statement of the head of the Soviet Mission and will tomorrow submit in general outline a draft of our common aims, which could be discussed.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: Our aim is clear and now it is a matter of drawing up a plan to achieve this aim. Our aim is clear-cut: to defend the peace-loving countries headed by Britain, France and

the Soviet Union against the aggressive bloc in Europe. That, I think, is the aim, and we must now discuss the means of achieving it. The aim is clear.

GENERAL DOUMENC says that for their part they would employ all their forces against the enemy and that he thought all the forces of the USSR should also be engaged against the aggressive bloc.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: Quite right. But we must first discuss the military plan. The aggressive European bloc, if it attacks one of the countries, must be smashed at all costs, and for this we must have an appropriate military plan. This plan must be discussed in all detail, and we must negotiate and conclude a military Convention, go home and wait for events with a comfortable sense of strength.

GENERAL DOUMENC advances three principles:

1. The establishment of two firm fronts against the enemy both in the West and in the East.
2. The continuity of fronts.
3. The use of all forces against the enemy.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: We have nothing to say against these principles, but I should like to return to the subject under discussion—giving each other in an idea of our plans, and discussing them. As concerns the principles, they are unquestionably correct.

ADMIRAL DRAX: With your permission we shall now adjourn, go home and prepare the material.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: Are there any objections to adjourning the meeting at this point? We must still settle a point of procedure. I suggest that we draw up the agenda for the next meeting. If you do not object to that, we should now determine the items for tomorrow's agenda, if only for the morning session, and settle the order in which we shall preside. In my opinion it should be as follows: head of the Soviet Mission, head of the British Mission, and head of the French Mission.

ADMIRAL DRAX and GENERAL DOUMENC consent, and add: As regards tomorrow, you have already set out a programme.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: I should like to make certain once again. Tomorrow we must acquaint each other with our available plans for organizing the defence of the three contracting Powers—Britain, France and the Soviet Union—against the aggressive bloc and then go on to discuss them. If no one objects, we could now adjourn for the day.

ADMIRAL DRAX and GENERAL DOUMENC accept this programme and state that they will do their best for the success of the work.

The meeting is adjourned.

The meeting was adjourned at 1.10 p.m.

No. 412. Record of the Morning Meeting of the Military Missions of the USSR, Britain and France

August 13, 1939

Opened at 10.45 a.m.

Adjourned at 12.30 p.m.

The head of the British Mission, ADMIRAL DRAX, is in the chair.

Before opening the meeting ADMIRAL DRAX thanks Marshal Voroshilov for the new arrangement of seats, which will greatly help the proceedings; then he requests the delegates to speak in short sentences to ease the task of the interpreters.

He says that, although it will be difficult to discuss aims, principles and plans concurrently, he is prepared, in view of Marshal Voroshilov's proposal, to discuss the plan of organizing defence against the aggressive countries in Europe.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: There appears to be some misunderstanding—apparently it is the interpreter's fault. If the Chairman permits, I shall elucidate yesterday's proposal. Yesterday, we proposed to discuss at today's meeting, or rather to acquaint one another with the plans in the possession of the Military Missions concerning the organization of the defence of the contracting parties against aggression in Europe, with the understanding that the principles and aims are already clear to all of us and that the very plans which we are going to discuss here are based on the relevant principles; they must build upon the fundamental precept that we are organizing our armed forces for the defence of our states. If it developed that this assumption is insufficient, we could touch specially upon principles and aims. But I fear that this would take us too far afield.

I repeat, the principles and aims are clear. What we do not know are the plans. For this reason, we must forthwith set out the plans.

ADMIRAL DRAX says that in the course of the conference our principles and aims will have to be defined and put in writing, but that today he is prepared to begin with the plans.

He goes on to say that some of the principles in these negotiations will be put in writing in the course of the day.

You are probably interested most in the plan of land operations on the Western frontier, says Admiral Drax. I shall therefore ask General Doumenc to set forth the defence plan for the Western frontier.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: I presume that in presenting the defence plan of France and Britain for the Western Front General Doumenc will not confine himself to the West alone, and will state how, in his opinion, we should organize our defence, to draw off concentrations of the aggressor to the East. I shall be pleased if the *exposé* of the plan does not confine itself solely to the defence plan for France, but embraces all the assumptions of the French General Staff.

ADMIRAL DRAX remarks that the plan will deal with all the fronts. If questions arise, he adds, General Doumenc will answer them at the end of his *exposé*.

It goes without saying, he continues, that the Chiefs of Staff will work out the plans jointly; here we shall present a general sketch, and shall deal with the details later.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: That isn't very clear. The plan must be defined here. I believe that it is the duty of this important gathering representing both the Governments and armed forces of the three contracting Powers to determine the essentials of the plan: the numerical strength of the armies of the three Powers, their material resources and the actual direction of operations in the defence of our states. All this, I think, must be defined here.

If Mr. Chairman, Admiral Drax, has no objection, we shall agree on that. If there are other proposals, I should ask you to specify them.

ADMIRAL DRAX suggests that first a summary of the plan should be presented and then its failings be examined.

ARMY COMMANDER SHAPOSHNIKOV: Yesterday General Doumenc spoke of the need to devote all our forces to combatting the aggressor. For this reason, our Military Mission would like to know the plan of operations not just of the land forces, but also of the air and naval forces.

ADMIRAL DRAX states that all this would be included in the plan, but he thought that the Army aspect of the problem was the one which interested the Soviet Mission most, and that General Doumenc would therefore first deal with the Army.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: Start with anything you like. We are interested in the general plan—for land, air and naval forces. All the available forces of the three contracting Powers, and of all the others connected with them, would have to be employed against the aggressor.

Admiral Drax suggests that General Doumenc begin his *exposé*.

Before opening his *exposé*, GENERAL DOUMENC states that he has two requests: one—as he was going to divulge fairly accurate figures about the state of the French Army, he begged all those present to keep what he would say in the strictest confidence and to forget it on leaving the hall; second—that he would like to remain seated and that questions should be asked after he ended his *exposé*.

Both requests are granted.

GENERAL DOUMENC says that in compliance with Marshal Voroshilov's request he proposes to open his *exposé* with facts about the numerical strength (and) directions of operations of the French armed forces, and their armaments and supplies.

In speaking of the French armed forces, General Doumenc asks Marshal Voroshilov and Admiral Drax to do him the honour of assuming that the French Army is ready for battle.

The French Army consists of 110 divisions. Three divisions make up an army corps and the corps are grouped in armies of four corps.

French divisions have three infantry regiments and two artillery regiments. An army corps and an army have their own artillery and tanks. Apart from this, the French Army has 4,000 modern tanks and 3,000 heavy guns from 150 mm to 420 mm (75 mm [guns] and howitzers, which are part of the divisions, are not included in this figure). These figures also exclude anti-aircraft and coast defence units, and troops in North Africa and West Africa. Furthermore, there are Spanish Republican troops numbering 200,000 who wish to serve in the French Army.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: Have they been enrolled, or are they still asking to be enrolled?

GENERAL DOUMENC: A part has been enrolled. Furthermore, there are training depots for recruits which I have not mentioned in the *exposé*.

Going on to the question of mobilization, General Doumenc specified the time it would take to concentrate the armed forces at the point of operations [*sic*]. The covering force would be ready in six hours and would take up positions along the entire French border and in the fortified areas. There are now fortifications along the entire French border, and the Maginot Line has been extended to the sea.

Some of the fortifications, running from the Jura to the Belgian border, are more modern, and stronger. Between Belgium and the sea they compare with the Siegfried Line. In the Jura and the Alps there are strong shields (individual defence points) at all places where troops can pass. They are very easy to defend.

In the last two years, France has gone to considerable effort to fortify her borders.

With covering forces stationed in the fortified areas, the French Army is able to bring all its main forces to the frontier in less than ten days, with two-thirds of the forces arriving at the point of concentration within eight days and the remainder two days later.

Distribution along the front is not uniform, but it is possible to effect any redeployment in 10 days. General Gamelin disposes of eight lateral lines for this purpose—four railways and four motor roads. They are about 200 kilometres deep. With their help the Commander-in-Chief can alter the disposition of his troops at will.

Out of the 110 divisions 20 are not easily moved, being employed for the defence of Tunisia and Corsica, and for manning the Maginot Line. The other 90 divisions are easily transferable.

Further, General Doumenc turns to questions of supply.

The French Army has a strict rule of keeping a six months' reserve of supplies, munitions and other war material. All this reserve is located in depots which are well concealed from air attack.

No less than 10 railway lines provide for the normal supply of the army. Manufacture of supplies is on a war footing. A law has been issued recently in France under which all workers are declared mobilized and receive mobilization cards in the same way as soldiers.

The law permits the Government to mobilize the desired number of workers for the war industries. In order to extend the output of steel, pig iron and other goods for defence needs we shall have to convert more factories, so as to add to the existing war plants. In about three months the output of these plants will equal consumption. In six months it will exceed consumption.

This explains why the French Army keeps a six months' reserve of supplies.

Turning to Marshal Voroshilov, General Doumenc says that if fuel supply questions are of interest to him, he would be glad to deal with them.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: If it is not going to hold you up and is part of your plan, we are ready to listen.

GENERAL DOUMENC: We have a six months' war supply of fuel in our storage tanks, but these, to our regret, are inadequately protected, particularly those along the coast. Measures are being taken to protect them.

Many underground fuel stores are now being built. Should the supply of fuel be interrupted, we could produce engines working on generator gas within three months. In three months their number could be brought up to 10,000.

We are also able to produce synthetic fuels of all kinds.

There are adequate stocks of cotton and alcohol to produce explosives.

Then **GENERAL DOUMENC** outlines the plan of operations.

If the main Nazi forces are concentrated on the Western frontier, France will meet them with a solid and continuous front. She will hold the enemy offensive with the help of her fortifications, and will then, after amassing her troops at points advantageous for tanks and artillery, take the counter-offensive. By that time the French Army will be reinforced with British troops, whose number, however, he is unfortunately unable to state.

With the help of the lateral communication lines, of which he [General Doumenc] had already spoken, General Gamelin will be able to mount a powerful attack at short notice.

For example, they can move 15 divisions simultaneously along the four lateral roads by motor transport.

This powerful attack will prevent the transference of enemy troops from West to East.

Should the main Nazi force be massed on the Eastern Front, the Germans will still have to leave not less than 40 divisions against France, and in that case General Gamelin will employ all his forces to attack the Germans.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: If the aggressor — in this case Germany — launches his attack eastward, evidently against Poland, General Gamelin expects the Germans to leave no less than 40 divisions on the French border?

GENERAL DOUMENC: Yes, not less than 40 divisions.

Hitler says that the Siegfried Line is impregnable, but we cannot agree. There is no fortress that cannot be taken.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: Yes, I agree with you.

GENERAL DOUMENC points out that in the past towns, surrounded with powerful walls which artillery could not breach, and with five lines of fortifications, have fallen. The French have learned how to break through this line.

I think that Marshal Voroshilov is well acquainted with these methods. First you have to break through the fortifications, and then extend the breach.

In this case, General Gamelin will make the enemy switch his forces back from the Eastern Front.

Should the enemy fail to do so, the Nazi forces will be defeated.

In conclusion, General Doumenc said that he had presented a general outline of French defence and that if there are any questions he is prepared to reply to them with the help of his imperfect memory.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: If the Chairman permits, I have the following questions:

FIRST QUESTION—a technical one. I should like to know if there are any fortified areas south of the Maginot Line and towards the sea.

SECOND QUESTION—What land forces does Britain contribute during the war in the alternative just outlined by General Doumenc?

THIRD QUESTION—With what forces does Belgium participate in the war in the alternative outlined by General Doumenc?

FOURTH QUESTION—Will Poland enter the war on France's side, what forces will she engage, and is there a treaty to that effect?

FIFTH QUESTION—Does the French General Staff expect Italy to take part on the side of the aggressor, and if so, what forces will France deploy on the Italian front?

SIXTH QUESTION—What forces will the French General Staff leave on the Spanish border?

I have not put two more questions connected with General Doumenc's report.

The first is about the operational plan of the French Air Force, and the other about the operational plan of the French Navy. When I say French I am not altogether precise. What I mean is the operational plan of the joint air and naval forces of France and Britain.

GENERAL DOUMENC asks to be allowed to reply in the evening.

ADMIRAL DRAX proposes an adjournment and that the meeting be resumed at 5.30 p. m.

No. 413. Record of the Evening Meeting of the Military Missions of the USSR, Britain and France

August 13, 1939

Opened at 5.36 p.m.

Closed at 7.10 p.m.

GENERAL DOUMENC is in the chair. He declares the meeting open.

GENERAL DOUMENC: I have made use of the interval to draft the principles and aims of which we have spoken earlier. I hand these documents to you, Marshal Voroshilov and Admiral Drax, for your information, and ask you to consider them and offer your opinion at tomorrow's meeting. (He hands the documents to Marshal Voroshilov and Admiral Drax.)

Now I shall reply to the questions raised by Marshal Voroshilov.

Are there any fortified sectors south of the Maginot Line?

(General Doumenc shows the Maginot Line to the Marshal on the map. As he had said at the morning session, it has been extended to the sea.)

You asked how it runs southward. It is strong enough along the Rhine, just as in the North.

(General Doumenc points out the particularly strong sections of the Maginot Line on the map.)

Now the fortifications along the River Doubs. Here we have a network of fortifications with one major centre.

Then come almost impassable mountains.

(On the map General Doumenc points out specially fortified areas in the Alps.)

These fortifications straddle the natural passages accessible to troops. From the French side the Alps are particularly hard to cross in view of the width of the mountain range. But this does not apply to the other side of the French border.

I avail myself of my rights as Chairman to withhold a reply to your second question about the British contribution in defence and wish to refer it to the representative of the British Army, General Heywood.

GENERAL HEYWOOD: Britain has made a very great effort to be strong on land, air and sea.

I am going to give a few details of the organization of the British Land Forces.

The British Army consists of two basic parts. One of these is the professional army, relatively small, but well trained, motorized and equipped with modern weapons. Half of this army is stationed in Britain and the other half overseas.

The other part is the "territorial army", which is more numerous and on the spot, but less well trained.

In addition, we have the colonial forces and the forces of the various Dominions.

Thanks to Hitler, Britain has introduced compulsory military service. This means that we now have little difficulty in raising a numerically formidable army.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: Regular or territorial?

GENERAL HEYWOOD: Both.

The system in the present-day army is such that after completing their compulsory military training these troops either enlist voluntarily in the regular army, or are compulsorily transferred to the territorial army. Raising formations now depends entirely on the availability of armament and equipment.

The Marshal must be aware of the industrial power of our country, and therefore our programme will be fulfilled quickly enough.

Our programme is to mobilize a first echelon of 16 divisions, which will be ready for service by the first stage of the war. If war breaks out tomorrow the number of troops will be small, but if it breaks out in six months the situation will be greatly changed.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: How soon after the outbreak of war will the 16 divisions of which General Heywood has spoken be ready?

GENERAL HEYWOOD: In the shortest possible time.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: If war were to break out tomorrow, how many divisions, and how soon, would you be able to send to France?

GENERAL HEYWOOD: At present Britain has five infantry divisions and one motorized division, which have been brought up to war establishment as regards personnel by enrollment of recruits. These can be sent at once.

I should like to remind the Marshal that in the last war we started with six divisions and ended with a hundred. We are more advantageously placed at present, and I am confident that we shall play a greater part in the early period of the war.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: The General intended also to inform us about the second echelon, but we interfered with our questions. Now I should like to ask him to tell us about the second echelon.

GENERAL HEYWOOD: 19 divisions exist already, while the other 13 are in the process of formation and depend entirely on the question of armament and equipment.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: Are we to understand that there are 16 divisions in the first echelon and 16 in the second? Is that right?

GENERAL HEYWOOD: Precisely.

GENERAL DOUMENC: Allow me to go on to the third question — about Belgium's participation in the war in the alternative we are considering. I shall try to deal with this question as clearly and broadly as possible.

The question of Belgium is for us the same as that of Switzerland. I want to speak about the Western Front, which applies equally to both these countries.

The armies of these countries must primarily defend their own territory. We must not, and cannot, enter their territory, until they ask us to do so. But we are ready to answer this call. If the request should come too late and their front is in danger, it will be our mechanized troops and air forces that will begin operations.

At the same time, General Gamelin will know how to ensure numerical superiority with the help of the available lateral lines of communication.

In any case, we are ready in every way and by every means to provide assistance, in particular by organizing lines of communication in their rear, for they are deficient in them, and by furnishing the necessary armament and supplies.

I know, on the other hand, and it is also probably known to Marshal Voroshilov, that at present these two countries are building strong fortifications along their borders.

I go on to the fourth question: Is there any agreement which defines the forces that Poland will produce and how they will be employed?

Poland has a Mutual Assistance Treaty with France. I have already spoken this morning on what we are going to do on the Western Front if Poland is attacked. If Poland is not attacked, and France is, Poland is committed to do the same for us.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: Could you say more clearly what that means?

GENERAL DOUMENC: I do not personally know the exact number of troops which Poland is to produce. All I know is that the Commander-in-Chief of the Polish Army is obliged to assist us with all available forces.

Allow me to go on to the fifth question: Has the French General Staff taken into consideration the intervention of Italy on Germany's side, and if so, with what forces will France oppose her?

Yes, I have taken that into account, and there are covering forces along the Italian border; furthermore, provision has been made to concentrate troops if this is necessary. I expect that we shall need eight divisions to begin with. Further reinforcements, over and above these eight divisions, will largely depend on the season, since the border runs across the Alps.

Marshal Voroshilov asked a further question: Will Italy come into the war at the same time as Germany?

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: We did not ask that question.

The initial reply covers our question entirely.

ADMIRAL DRAX: We have had some information on that score in London, although it may not be entirely reliable. According to this information it seems to us very unlikely that Italy would march with Germany if the USSR had a military agreement with the Western Powers. It also seems to us on the strength of this information that if such a Pact were known to exist Hitler would not risk a war.

GENERAL DOUMENC: The proverb says: "If you wish for peace, be prepared for war." And we must prepare for war.

I go on to the next question: What forces France proposes to leave on the Spanish border?

To the best of my knowledge the only forces there are border posts. One idea, which appears to be the best, is to reinforce this border with the former troops of the Spanish Republic.

Before going on to the next question I should like to dwell on the following. It seems to me that the Marshal has asked for our opinion about the Italian forces.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: We did not raise this question.

GENERAL DOUMENC: Then allow me to deal with the operational plan of the joint air and naval forces of France and Britain.

I know that the French Navy co-operates very closely with the British Navy and that together they make up a powerful force.

The principal aim of our Navies is to destroy the enemy. This is the principal task, and everything else is secondary.

There are, of course, many details, but they apply to communications between the fronts. I meant to speak about these communications yesterday, but in compliance with your wish, Mr. Marshal, I confined myself today to just the land forces.

The question of communications between the Western and Eastern fronts is of extreme importance. It is highly important to make certain that General Gamelin and Marshal Voroshilov could communicate, consult, and help each other. Each is responsible for his own front, but both fronts must be in touch with one another.

Now I turn to the question of air forces.

The air force is considered under two heads according to the tasks it has to perform: army-co-operation air forces and independent action air forces.

At present we have one squadron for every two divisions. Besides, there are reserve aircraft to back up the army support air arm.

But I have forgotten that I am the Chairman and that there is an air force expert in our Mission—General Valin, who is in command of an air division at Rheims.

GENERAL VALIN: I can only say what General Doumenc has said before me, namely, that our air force is divided into two parts—army-co-operation and of independent action (fighter and bomber aircraft).

As regards army-co-operation air force, France has an adequate number of reconnaissance and spotting aircraft. I think this highly important, and for this reason we must increase the strength of this air arm.

The army-co-operation air force is distributed as follows: one squadron for every two divisions, and two reconnaissance squadrons for every army.

All in all, there are 70 squadrons, ten aircraft in each.

These army-co-operation aircraft are not all of one type. Their type depends on the functions they are to perform.

As regards the bomber and fighter air force, its employment is not as clearly defined as that of the army-co-operation forces. We

must first decide the question of land operations. This question is bound up with the general method of warfare. We are still studying the matter on the basis of available facts about operations of the allied air force on the Eastern Front.

It seems to me that we ought to put off the question of the fighter and bomber forces until we learn more about operational plans on the Eastern Front.

I have had an opportunity to discuss the problem with Air Marshal Burnett* who shares this point of view, but not with General Loktionov. However, knowing him to be a distinguished expert in air force matters, I am certain that he shares it too.

ARMY COMMANDER LOKTIONOV: I think that something should be said about the number of aircraft, the organization of the French Air Force of Independent Action, and about the part which the British Air Force is to play on the French fronts.

GENERAL VALIN thinks, however, that the three air forces should be examined together and the tasks which they will be set.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: Our Mission does not object.

GENERAL DOUMENC suggests that the meeting should draw up the agenda for the next session and says that he expects Marshal Voroshilov to give an *exposé* about the disposition of Soviet troops on the Eastern Front similar to the one he has just made about the French Army.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: I do not object to the proposal made by General Doumenc, but should first like the Anglo-French Mission to reply to one more question: What part do these Missions or the General Staffs of France and Britain consider the Soviet Union should take in a war against the aggressor if he attacks France and Britain, or if he attacks Poland or Rumania, or if he attacks them together, and also if he attacks Turkey? In brief, how do the British and French Missions conceive our joint action against the aggressor or the aggressive bloc in the event of an aggression against us?

GENERAL DOUMENC: We have today studied the situation on the Western Front and stated what forces can be made available on that front. I should be glad to have similar facts from Marshal Voroshilov concerning the Eastern Front.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: My question was apparently mistranslated to the General. I have already informed the meeting that I shall willingly make the communication in which they are interested, but that I should first like an answer to my question: What part do the British and French General Staffs consider the Soviet Armed Forces should take jointly with the armed forces of Britain and France in the war against the bloc of aggressors, or the main aggressor?

GENERAL DOUMENC states that he would be ready to answer the question tomorrow and then hear Marshal Voroshilov's communication.

* A member of the British Military Mission.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: Has my question been properly understood? I wish to make it clear. The Soviet Union, as you know, has no common border either with Britain or with France. We can, therefore, only take part in the war on the territory of neighbouring states, particularly Poland and Rumania.¹⁴³

GENERAL DOUMENC states that he will make a statement on this score tomorrow.

ADMIRAL DRAX proposes that there be only one meeting daily, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., with a 30-minute interval, so as not to waste time on travel.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: The Soviet Mission thinks that we must work not less than four hours. We have no objection to holding only one meeting and suggest that our sessions start at 10 a.m. and close at 2 p.m. with a 15-minute interval.

The proposal is accepted.

GENERAL DOUMENC declares the session adjourned.

FRENCH MILITARY MISSION

DRAFT FRANCO-ANGLO-SOVIET MILITARY AGREEMENT *

Preamble

The present Convention will come into force in accordance with the terms of the Treaties which bind the three contracting Powers when one of the eventualities laid down in these Treaties occurs.

In view of the military situation in Europe today, this Convention deals with the urgent measures to be taken should war break out in the immediate future.

Article I

The three contracting Powers are agreed on the vital importance of building up a continuous, solid and durable front on Germany's Eastern as well as on her Western frontiers.

Article II

In order to oppose without delay the development of the common enemy's military action, the three contracting Powers undertake to operate with all their forces, naval, land and air, on all enemy fronts on which they can fight effectively until Germany is defeated.

The manner in which these forces are employed will depend on the decisions of the respective Supreme Commands. These decisions

* Handed to the Military Mission of the USSR on August 13, 1939. Translated from the French.

will be arrived at according to the development of the situation, but the first common aims to be pursued are specified in the present agreement.

August 13, 1939

From the archives. Published in *International Affairs*, 1959,
No. 2, pp. 150-153.

**No. 414. Telegram from the Air Attaché of the USSR in Britain
to the General Staff of the Red Army**

August 13, 1939

Additional information confirms the following:

The timing of action against Poland is not yet known. It is believed that one more proposal will be made to Poland which is designed to convince her that resistance is useless. She will be told that she should not be a tool of England. A decision has been taken to resolve this question this year.

Up to now it is felt that no active intervention by England and France is to be expected and that the conflict will be of a local character. Large numbers of troops (up to 50 divisions) will be thrown against Poland at once.

The strength of the divisions earmarked for action against Poland will soon be raised to wartime levels.

I. Cherny

From the archives.

**No. 415. Record of the Meeting of the Military Missions of the
USSR, Britain and France**

August 14, 1939

Opened at 10.05 a.m.

Adjourned at 2.20 p.m.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV is in the chair.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: Allow me to declare the meeting of the Military Missions of France, Britain and the Soviet Union open.

At yesterday's meeting General Doumenc submitted a draft of what he called principles, which are apparently to be discussed by our conference. These so-called principles, by their tenor, are evidently meant to be the basis for the future Convention. In view of the gra-

vity of the questions raised, the Soviet Military Mission must study thoroughly the three principles submitted before it makes its reply.

Allow me to turn to the question in hand.

It was decided at yesterday's meeting that today's meeting would open with General Doumenc's answer to the question I raised. Need I repeat the question?

GENERAL DOUMENC asks the Marshal to remind him of the question.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: Yesterday I asked General Doumenc the following question: What part do the present Missions, or the General Staffs of France and Britain, consider the Soviet Union should play in the war against an aggressor if he attacks France and Britain, if he attacks Poland or Rumania, or Poland and Rumania together, and if he attacks Turkey? In brief, how do the British and French Missions conceive our joint action against the aggressor or the bloc of aggressors in the event of an aggression against one of the contracting parties or against the countries I have just referred to?

GENERAL DOUMENC: I shall try and answer this question. It is easy to answer, because, I feel, the Marshal and I understand each other well.

General Gamelin holds the view, and I, as his subordinate, share it, that our initial task is for each party to hold firm on its own front and group all its forces on that front. As regards the countries referred to earlier, we consider that it is their duty to defend their own territory. But we must be prepared to come to their assistance when they ask for it. And in that event we must be prepared to ensure lines of communication in which they are deficient. I have drawn up a rough sketch which will show my ideas more clearly. (General Doumenc offers an explanation to Marshal Voroshilov on his sketch.)

These countries defend their own territory, but we extend help to them when they ask for it.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: But what if they do not ask for it?

GENERAL DOUMENC: We know that they are in need of assistance.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: . . . if they do not ask for this assistance in good time, it will mean that they have put up their hands, that they have surrendered.

GENERAL DOUMENC: That would be highly deplorable.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: What will the French Army do then?

GENERAL DOUMENC: France will then keep on her own front the forces she deems necessary.

If circumstances compel, General Gamelin will take the responsibility on himself for deciding the question. An impregnable front, solid connections with the rear and help to these countries by lines of communication. We intend to study communications between us in detail, and are willing to deal with this later. I say nothing of Turkey, because that is connected with the question of sea communications, which we have decided to discuss later.

Aside from this basic participation, I see two more highly

important points which we must jointly discuss. First, joint action against the communications of the enemy fascist Power (shows the direction on the map).

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: Sea communications?

GENERAL DOUMENC: Yes. As I have said, we shall study questions of supply and communications in detail later on.

Second, joint action of our bomber and fighter air force. That is another question the discussion of which we yesterday decided to postpone. I ask the Marshal, are my explanations sufficiently clear?

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: They are not clear. Excuse my frankness, but we soldiers must be forthright in what we say.

This scheme is not clear, because I, and I think my colleagues too, do not have a very clear idea about the place of the Soviet Armed Forces in it. In general, the outline is clear, but the part in it of the Soviet Armed Forces is not altogether clear. It is not clear where they are located and how they physically participate in the common struggle.

GENERAL DOUMENC (unfolds a map of the USSR and points to the area of its Western frontier): The Germans must never be allowed to break through this front. And that is the front where the Soviet Armed Forces should base themselves.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: It is a "front" which we always occupy, and which, you may rest assured, General, the fascists will never break, whether we come to an agreement with you or not.

GENERAL DOUMENC: I am very glad to hear this assurance from the Marshal.

If the Germans attack Poland, I don't think the Soviet forces can enter the struggle before they complete their concentration. I ask the Marshal this question: Will he be able to render help to Poland at the moment the attack occurs?

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: There are no accidents in the world. As concerns our plan, our forces and possibilities, we shall make our report later, in accordance with our agreement of yesterday.

GENERAL DOUMENC: I am happy that you will tell us your point of view on this question. If the Marshal could present his plan now, it would be easier to say what can be done to help Poland. I have made my proposal to the Marshal. I have raised the question. Now I await his counterproposal.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: General Doumenc has replied to part of my question, but not to all of it. We have in mind the Eastern Front. If the aggressor, or the bloc of aggressors, attacks Poland across East Prussia or directly attacks the Western border of Poland—that is one question. General Doumenc has replied to it.

The second part of my question refers to the case when the aggressor attacks France or Britain directly, or both these countries together. What help do the French and British General Staffs consider the Armed Forces of the Soviet Union should then render to their countries?

(Admiral Drax confers at length with General Doumenc.)

GENERAL DOUMENC: I explained yesterday that aggression in the West automatically involves Poland. In the circumstances, General Gamelin thinks we shall have to see how the situation develops. General Gamelin is of the opinion that Soviet troops must be concentrated at the points indicated in the plan and that he and Marshal Voroshilov must maintain the closest contact in order to avoid land operations with insufficient strength. General Gamelin will disposition his forces according to the plan and will ask for an immediate air attack on Germany and her communications, while the operations in the West will be prepared with considerable forces.

It may be said with certainty that as soon as Poland and Rumania enter the war they will require help in supplies. We shall do everything we can, and these communications will be ensured. But it is plain that the USSR can do much in that direction because the Red Army is better disposed.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: I do not agree with your idea. What do you mean by better disposed? (The interpreter explains that geographical position is meant.) Regardless of what happens, our country is well situated to defend its borders. But it cannot consider itself well disposed for joint action against the enemy.

GENERAL DOUMENC: I'll put it more clearly as follows. We mean your air force and its attack on Germany. We are not as yet dealing with the question of lines of communication.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: I want a clear answer to my very clear question concerning the joint action of the Armed Forces of Britain, France and the Soviet Union against the common enemy—the bloc of aggressors, or the main aggressor—should he attack. That is all I want to know and I ask you to tell me how General Gamelin and the General Staffs of Britain and France conceive this joint action.

I am interested in the following question, or, to be more precise, the following supplement to my question:

Do the French and British General Staffs think that the Soviet land forces will be admitted to Polish territory in order to make direct contact with the enemy in case Poland is attacked? And further:

Do you think that our Armed Forces will be allowed passage across Polish territory, across Galicia, to make contact with the enemy and to fight him in the south of Poland? And one more thing:

Is it proposed to allow Soviet troops across Rumanian territory if the aggressor attacks Rumania?

These are the three questions which interest us most.

(Admiral Drax confers at length with General Doumenc.)

GENERAL DOUMENC: I agree with the Marshal that the concentration of Soviet troops must take place principally in the areas indicated by the Marshal, and the distribution of these troops will be made at your discretion. I think that the weak points of the Polish-Rumanian front are its flanks and their limiting point. We shall

speak of the left flank when we deal with the question of communications.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: I want you to reply to my direct question. I said nothing about Soviet troop concentrations. I asked whether the British and French General Staffs envisage passage of our troops towards East Prussia or other points to fight the common enemy.

GENERAL DOUMENC: I think that Poland and Rumania will implore you, Marshal, to come to their assistance.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: And perhaps they will not. It is not evident so far. We have a Non-Aggression Pact with the Poles, while France and Poland have a Treaty of Mutual Assistance. This is the reason why the question I raised is not an idle one as far as we are concerned, since we are discussing the plan of joint action against the aggressor. To my mind, France and Britain should have a clear idea about the way we can extend real help or about our participation in the war. (There is a lengthy exchange of opinion between Admiral Drax and General Heywood.)

ADMIRAL DRAX: If Poland and Rumania do not ask for Soviet help they will soon become German provinces, and then the USSR will decide how to act. If, on the other hand, the USSR, France and Britain are in alliance, then the question of whether or not Rumania and Poland ask for help becomes quite clear.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: I repeat, gentlemen, that this question is a cardinal question for the Soviet Union.

ADMIRAL DRAX: I repeat my reply once again. If the USSR, France and Britain are allies, then in my personal opinion there can be little doubt that Poland and Rumania will ask for help. But that is my personal opinion, and to obtain a precise and satisfactory answer, it is necessary to approach Poland.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: I regret that the Military Missions of Great Britain and France have not considered this question and have not brought an exact answer.

(Admiral Drax and General Doumenc confer again.)

ADMIRAL DRAX: Yesterday you asked us for our opinion, Mr. Marshal. We gave it to you. We are discussing a question whose solution depends on the Polish Government which is under the pressure [of threat] of war. I should like to cite the following example: If a man is drowning in a river and another man says he is ready and willing to throw him a lifebelt, will he decline to ask for it? The lifebelt will be on the spot if we act jointly.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: Since you're resorting to parables, allow me to reciprocate. I must say the following: But what if the "lifebelt" is so far distant that it can't be thrown to the drowning man? A lifebelt of that kind, naturally, is useless to him.

GENERAL DOUMENC: I shall extend this comparison and say that this "lifebelt" must first of all be strong and solid. That is a question on which I have insisted from the military standpoint from the very first.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV indicates on the map how assistance can be rendered realistically and how the Soviet Union can participate with its Armed Forces in the common struggle against the aggressor.

GENERAL DOUMENC: It will be a conclusive victory.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: No one knows what it will be. Anything can happen in war. But passage of our troops onto Polish territory through the Wilno Corridor and Galicia, and through Rumanian territory, is a preliminary condition. It is a preliminary condition of our negotiations and of a joint Treaty between the three states. If that is not granted, if the question is not solved favourably, I doubt the usefulness of our conversations.

I do not think that the statement by General Doumenc and by other representatives of the French and British Military Missions to the effect that Poland and Rumania will themselves ask for help is quite right. They, Poland and Rumania, may turn to the Soviet Union for help, and they may not, or they may ask for help so belatedly that this will have very grave consequences for the armies of France, Britain and the allies whom they will have. We shall not at that moment be able to exercise an appropriate influence on events.

The statement by Admiral Drax that if Poland and Rumania do not ask for Soviet help they will very soon be German provinces, is a very interesting one. I shall deal briefly with that question.

I do not contest the view itself that Poland and Rumania, if they do not ask for Soviet assistance, may very rapidly become provinces of aggressive Germany. But I must note that our conference is a Conference of Military Missions of three Great Powers, and the people representing the Armed Forces of these Powers should know the following: it is not in our interests, not in the interests of the Armed Forces of Great Britain, France and the Soviet Union, that the supplementary armed forces of Poland and Rumania should be destroyed. Yet if they, Poland and Rumania, fail to ask for Soviet help in good time, then, according to the Admiral, they will be annihilated.

This is why the Military Mission of the Soviet Union insists that the question of allowing passage of Soviet troops across Polish territory (in the North and South) and Rumanian territory should be settled before we come to terms on the appropriate documents that are to culminate our conference.

ADMIRAL DRAX: We have heard the Marshal's statement with great interest and I now propose a 15-minute interval in which to discuss it.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: I don't object to it and declare a 15-minute interval.

(AFTER THE INTERVAL)

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: The session continues.

GENERAL DOUMENC: I want to say first of all that we are pleased with the Marshal's proposals concerning the organization of

defence on the Eastern Front. We think it is the best way of striking at the aggressor. But we must be certain that on our part we shall have adequate forces that can be engaged at the appropriate moment. We shall be pleased to know what forces the Marshal proposes to engage in our joint actions. Perhaps he will tell us now?

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: You have given our Mission no reply to our straightforward question. I repeat this question: Will the Soviet Armed Forces be allowed onto Polish territory in the Wilno area through the so-called Wilno Corridor? One.

Will the Soviet Armed Forces be permitted to advance through Polish territory in order to make contact with the aggressive troops through Galicia? Two.

Will the Soviet Armed Forces be given an opportunity to use Rumanian territory if the aggressor acts in that southern direction? Three.

I repeat once again: The answers to these straightforward questions are most cardinal for the Soviet Mission.¹⁴³ Without an exact and unequivocal answer to these questions further conversations will not have any real meaning.

Upon receipt of an answer to these three questions we shall at once present our plan and our proposals in such detail as we think fit, and which, I feel, will be to the satisfaction of the present high conference.

(General Doumenc, Admiral Drax and General Heywood confer at length.)

GENERAL HEYWOOD (on behalf of the heads of both Missions): In order to give you an accurate reply we ask for five minutes.

After a ten-minute discussion, during which Admiral Drax and General Heywood arrange their notes and read them to General Doumenc, General Heywood reads the following communication on behalf of the British and French Military Missions:

"We have already given our personal opinion quite clearly, and we take note of the Marshal's summary of the situation. But it must not be forgotten that Poland and Rumania are sovereign states, and that in the given case the authority required by the Soviet Mission must be obtained from these two Governments. The question has become a political one, and the USSR should ask the Polish and Rumanian Governments for the answer. This is obviously the most simple and direct procedure. However, if the Marshal specially wishes it, we are prepared to refer to London and Paris to request our Governments to ask the Polish and Rumanian Governments the following question:

"If the USSR is our ally, would they be prepared, in the event of aggression by Germany, to permit Soviet troops to enter Polish territory in the region of the Wilno Gap and in Galicia, and also to enter Rumanian territory in order to co-operate in operations against Germany?

"It is possible that Germany will be marching into Poland tomorrow. If it is desired to avoid wasting time, could we not proceed with

our work in the hope of affirmative answers to the above questions? It is our personal opinion that our conference can usefully continue.

"We have given the Marshal our defence plans in the West. In sending our requests to our Governments our Missions would feel greatly fortified if we knew how the Marshal intends to use the Soviet Armed Forces if permission for their passage across the territory of the above-mentioned countries is given."

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: I ask for an interval, in order to formulate the proposals of the Soviet Military Mission.

I declare a 15-minute interval.

(AFTER THE INTERVAL)

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: I apologize for the delay, and ask you to hear a statement by the Soviet Mission.

"The Soviet Military Mission, in answer to the communication of the British and French Military Missions, read by General Heywood, points out:—

1) The Soviet Military Mission did not, and does not, forget that Poland and Rumania are sovereign states. On the contrary, it is precisely on account of this indisputable fact that the Soviet Military Mission asked the British and French Military Missions to reply to the following question:

Will the Soviet Armed Forces be allowed to pass through Polish territory (the Wilno Corridor and Galicia) and through Rumanian territory in the case of aggression against Britain and France, or Poland and Rumania?

This question is all the more legitimate, in that France already has a political and military alliance with Poland, and Britain has a mutual Assistance Pact and a Military Treaty with Poland.

2) The Soviet Military Mission is in agreement with the British and French Military Missions in their opinion that this is a political question; but it is a military question to an even greater extent.

3) As regards the view of the British and French Military Missions that the simplest method would be for the Soviet Government to address itself directly to the Governments of Poland and Rumania, since the Soviet Union has no military agreements with Poland or Rumania, and since the danger of aggression in Europe principally affects Poland, Rumania, France and Britain, the question of the rights of passage of the Soviet Armed Forces across the territories of Poland and Rumania, and also the question of the action of the Soviet Armed Forces against the aggressor in the territory of these countries should be decided by the Governments of France and Britain in consultation with the Polish and Rumanian Governments.

4) The Soviet Military Mission expresses its regret at the absence of an exact answer on the part of the British and French Missions to the question raised about the right of passage of the Soviet Armed Forces over Polish and Rumanian territory.

The Soviet Military Mission considers that without a positive solution of this question the whole present attempt to conclude a Military Convention between France, Britain and the Soviet Union is, in its opinion, doomed to failure. For this reason, the Soviet Military Mission cannot in all conscience recommend to its Government that it take part in an undertaking obviously destined to fail.

5) The Soviet Military Mission asks that the replies to the question by the British and French Governments should be expedited.

Pending receipt of this reply the Soviet Military Mission is willing to set forth its plan for joint action against aggression in Europe.”

I am very sorry that today's session had to be spent entirely on [the discussion of] one question and one answer. Tomorrow's meeting will be devoted to the Soviet plans concerning our idea of joint action against aggression in Europe if we come to terms about concluding a Military Convention.

If there are no questions and comments we can adjourn. (No comments.)

I declare the meeting closed.

From the archives. Published
in *International Affairs*,
1959, No. 2, pp. 154-158.

No. 416. Telegram from the Head of the French Military Mission to the War Ministry of France

Moscow, August 14, 1939

The three Delegations had two meetings on August 13 and one long meeting on August 14.

The Soviet Delegation expressed a desire to achieve results and asked us not to discuss general and universally recognized principles but to consider only concrete questions.

At first, the question of the Western front was discussed, and tomorrow the Soviet Delegation is due to present a report on military resources and on plans of operations envisaged on the Russian front. But even before all that the Soviet Delegation today made the conclusion of a military pact contingent on the assurance that in the event of aggression against Poland and Rumania the Soviet Army could, if necessary, enter the Wilno Gap, Galicia and Rumanian territory. * Our work is nonetheless continuing.

Our Ambassador feels, as I do, that the quickest solution of the question would be to send to Warsaw General Valin, who has been

* See Document No. 415.

specially assigned by you to the Polish Staff. He could try to secure from the Polish Staff a secret agreement in principle which would enable the Franco-British Delegation to discuss the matter at the conference from the military standpoint while officially leaving the Polish Government uninvolved.

The British Mission is fully in agreement with this.

With reference to today's telegram from the Ambassador I have the honour to ask you to send me urgent instructions.

It has been agreed with the other two Delegations that no communiques about the present state of negotiations will be published. I hope to be able tomorrow to give you precise information as to the areas of Rumanian territory which could be the subject of discussion.

General Doumenc

From the archives of the
Ministry for Foreign Affairs
of Germany.

No. 417. Record of the Meeting of the Military Missions of the USSR, Britain and France

August 15, 1939
Opened at 10.07 a.m.
Adjourned at 1.20 p.m.

ADMIRAL DRAX (in the chair): I declare the meeting open.

Upon receipt at yesterday's session of the statement of the Soviet Military Mission we referred it to our Governments and at present are awaiting a reply. We are happy that while waiting for this reply the Soviet Mission is willing to continue the work of our conference. We, too, are willing to proceed.

We are now expecting an explanation of the Soviet plans on the Eastern Front, which, as the Marshal has said, will be to the satisfaction of the French and British Missions.

I ask the Marshal to begin the *exposé*.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: The Soviet Military Mission takes note of Admiral Drax's statement to the effect that the British and French Missions have forwarded our questions to their Governments and are expecting a reply to them. I think it is now possible to turn to an exposition of our plans and ask the Chairman to give the floor to Army Commander I. B. M. Shaposhnikov, a member of our Mission and Chief of the General Staff of the Red Army.

ADMIRAL DRAX: Please proceed.

ARMY COMMANDER SHAPOSHNIKOV: At previous meetings of the Military Missions we have heard [the plan] of the disposition

of the French Army in the West. In compliance with the request of the French and British Missions, I will now on behalf of the Soviet Military Mission expound the plan of the dispositions of the Armed Forces of the USSR on its Western frontiers.

Against aggression in Europe, the Red Army will deploy in the European part of the USSR and will dispose on the front 120 infantry divisions, 16 cavalry divisions, 5,000 heavy guns (including both guns and howitzers), 9,000 to 10,000 tanks, 5,000 to 5,500 warplanes (excluding auxiliary aircraft), that is, fighter and bomber aircraft.

These figures do not include the garrisons of the fortified areas, air defence troops, coast defence units, reserve training units, and rear troops.

I will not go into details about the organization of the Red Army, but I will say briefly that a rifle division consists of three rifle regiments and two artillery regiments; its war strength is 19,000 men.

A corps consists of three divisions and has its own artillery, viz., two regiments. (Admiral Drax asks General Heywood whether any of the officers are taking down Army Commander Shaposhnikov's exposition, and is answered in the affirmative.)

Armies contain a varied number of corps, from five to eight, and have their own artillery, aviation and tanks.

The garrisons of the fortified areas will be ready within 4 to 6 hours of receiving the alarm. The USSR has fortified areas along the whole length of its Western Frontier from the Arctic Ocean to the Black Sea.

The concentration of the Army takes from 8 to 20 days. The network of railways not only permits of the concentration of the Army on the border within the time indicated, but also permits of modification of this concentration along the front. We have along the Western frontier from 3 to 5 lateral lines of communication at a depth of 300 kilometres.

We have now a sufficient number of big powerful locomotives and heavy freight cars double the size of our former cars. The tonnage of our trains is double the previous tonnage. The speed of the trains has been increased.

We have a considerable quantity of motor transport, and our lateral road communications allow us to carry out considerable concentrations along the front by this means.

We have heard from General Doumenc a general outline of the French plans, but we have heard nothing concrete about the operational plans of the British Army from General Heywood. Similarly, we have heard nothing concrete of the plan of action on the high seas of the joint Anglo-French Fleet.

I will now give three alternative plans, in the event of aggression in Europe, for the joint action of the Armed Forces of Great Britain, France and the USSR, which have been approved by the Soviet Military Mission.

First alternative. If the aggressor bloc attacks Britain and France.

In this case, the USSR will put into the field a force equal to 70 per cent of the armed forces which Britain and France engage directly against the main aggressor, Germany. I will explain: for example, if Britain and France were to deploy directly against Germany 90 infantry divisions, the USSR would deploy 63 infantry divisions, 6 cavalry divisions and a corresponding force of artillery, tanks and aircraft, making up a total of about 2,000,000 men.

In this alternative, the support of Poland is considered essential on the strength of her treaty with Britain and France, and she should afford this support with all her strength. In doing so, Poland must concentrate 40 to 45 infantry divisions for the main battle on her own Western frontier and against East Prussia. The British and French Governments must obtain from Poland a promise to permit Soviet Armed Forces to move over and operate in her territories—the land and air forces through the Wilno Corridor; and, if possible, across Lithuania towards the East Prussian frontier; and also, if the situation so demands, across Galicia.

Although the concrete naval operational plans of the joint French and British Navies have not been expounded, I consider it necessary to give the considerations of the General Staff of the Red Army, approved by the Soviet Military Mission.

The action of the joint Anglo-French Navy should have the following aim:

- 1) Closing the English Channel, and breaking through with a strong squadron into the Baltic for action against the navy of the principal aggressor in the Baltic, and against his coasts.

- 2) Britain and France should obtain from the Governments of the Baltic States their permission for the temporary occupation by the Anglo-French Navy of the Aland Islands, the Moon-Sund Archipelago with its islands of Ozal, Dago and Wormsi, and the ports of Hango, Parnu, Hapsal, Ainazi, and Libau, with a view to protecting the neutrality and independence of these countries against attack by Germany.

- 3) Cutting off the supply of ore and other raw materials from Sweden to Germany.

- 4) Blockading the coast of the principal aggressor in the North Sea.

- 5) Controlling the Mediterranean and closing the Suez Canal and the Dardanelles.

- 6) Carrying out cruiser operations along the coasts of Norway and Finland outside their territorial waters, and round Murmansk and Archangel, against submarines and cruisers of the aggressor.

The Northern Fleet of the USSR will carry out cruiser operations along the coasts of Norway and Finland outside their territorial waters jointly with the Anglo-French squadron.

As regards our Baltic Fleet, in the event of a satisfactory settlement of the questions of temporarily occupying the islands and ports I have mentioned, it will be based with the joint Franco-British Fleet

on Hango, the Aland and Moon-Sund Archipelagoes, Hapsal, Parnu, Ainazi and Libau with the object of defending the independence of the Baltic countries.

In these circumstances, the Baltic Fleet of the USSR can develop its cruiser operations, the action of its submarines and its mine-laying operations along the coast of East Prussia and Pomerania. The submarines of the Baltic Fleet of the USSR will interfere with the transportation of industrial raw materials from Sweden to the chief aggressor.

(As Army Commander Shaposhnikov presents the operational plan, Admiral Drax and General Heywood fill in the dispositions in their sketch-maps.)

The second way in which hostilities may begin is aggression against Poland and Rumania.

In this case, Poland and Rumania deploy all their armed forces at the front.

Poland must defend Rumania. Poland and Rumania may be attacked not by Germany alone, but also by Hungary. Germany can put up to 90 divisions in the field against Poland.

France and Britain must act and immediately declare war on the aggressor.

The USSR can only intervene when France and Britain reach an agreement with Poland, and, if possible, with Lithuania, and also with Rumania, for the passage and operations of our troops through the Wilno Corridor, through Galicia, and Rumania. In that case, the USSR will engage forces equal to 100 per cent of the armed forces which Britain and France engage directly against Germany. For example, if France and Britain put 90 infantry divisions into the field against Germany, the USSR will put into the field 90 infantry divisions, 12 cavalry divisions and the corresponding number of guns, aircraft and tanks.

The tasks of the British and French Navies will be the same as indicated for the first alternative plan; and the tasks of the Northern and Baltic Fleets of the USSR also remain the same.

In the South, the Black Sea Fleet of the USSR, having closed the mouth of the Danube against the exit of the aggressors' submarines and other naval forces, will close the Bosphorus in order to prevent the entry into the Black Sea of hostile surface warships and submarines.

Third alternative plan.

This alternative envisages the case when the principal aggressor uses the territory of Finland, Estonia and Latvia, in order to attack the USSR.

In this case, France and Britain must immediately enter the war against the aggressor or aggressor bloc. Poland, bound by agreement with Britain and France, must enter the war against Germany, and grant rights of passage to our troops through the Wilno Corridor and into Galicia, in accordance with agreements which should be reached between the British, French and Polish Governments.

I have indicated before that the USSR will deploy 120 infantry divisions, 16 cavalry divisions, 5,000 heavy guns, 9,000 to 10,000 tanks and 5,000 to 5,500 aircraft. France and Great Britain must, in that case, engage the equivalent of 70 per cent of the Soviet Armed Forces just indicated and immediately begin active operations against the principal aggressor.

The action of the Anglo-French Navy should proceed as indicated in the first alternative plan.

Poland should deploy against Germany not less than 45 divisions of infantry, and the corresponding number of guns, aircraft and tanks.

If Rumania were to be dragged into the war, she should engage all her forces, and the British and French Governments should obtain the permission of the Rumanian Government for the passage of our forces across Rumanian territory.

These are the general considerations concerning common action by the Armed Forces of Britain, France and the USSR, as approved by the Soviet Military Mission.

(General lively discussion among all members of the British and French Military Missions.)

ADMIRAL DRAX: We thank the Marshal and the Chief of General Staff for the clear and precise presentation he has just made of the plan.

We have a number of questions. We would therefore like to have some time to discuss them, so that their number will not be too large. For this reason, we think it best to present these questions at tomorrow's meeting. There are also a number of questions we should like to ask today after the interval.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: Our side has no objection.

ADMIRAL DRAX announces an interval.
(*after the interval*)

ADMIRAL DRAX: We have decided that it will be best to ask our questions tomorrow.

I should like to set forth in brief the plan of naval operations of the Anglo-French fleet.

One of the principal tasks that confront the Navy is to maintain communications for ourselves and our allies, and, on the other hand, to paralyze the communications of the enemy.

We note with great interest the proposed plan of operations of the Soviet Navy in the Baltic. I should like to deal with these questions somewhat later, after treating a few questions which will better elucidate the situation.

From the point of view of world sea communications the Baltic is only of local importance, but we are well aware that it is of major interest to the USSR.

If we want the war to be won quickly, we should at once cut all enemy communications. I will now begin by setting forth considerations concerning outer lines of communication (oceans and outer seas).

This is a task which demands considerable forces. One of the principal tasks from the standpoint of difficulty and requiring superior forces is that of hunting down and destroying the enemy naval forces in order that they should not interfere with our communications.

The material resources required for war come to us chiefly from Australia and South America, but also from other parts of the world.

Germany has made arrangements which will enable her cruisers and submarines to operate 10,000 miles from their bases. Germany has not only land, but also floating, bases for her Navy.

I would remind you that the Atlantic Ocean contains more than 3,000,000 square miles, and the Pacific double that amount.

I think the experience of the last war has shown us and the Soviet Union how important it is to maintain communications in the open seas, to secure for our countries the necessary raw materials for military purposes. Soviet communications go either through Murmansk (Arctic Ocean), or through the Black Sea (the Dardanelles). To defend only these entrances would be insufficient to maintain all necessary lines of communication. The defence of these areas is a local matter, but it is insufficient to ensure general communications. You will therefore realize, and bear in mind, that even though we may undertake operations in the vicinity of the Soviet coasts, and though we may close the English Channel, we shall also have to operate our Navy over millions of square miles.

We must have a navy in the North Sea exceeding in strength the whole naval forces of Germany, which can be concentrated in that sea at very short notice.

We must have in the Mediterranean a navy greater than the Italian, which would enable us to destroy the naval forces of Italy. In the Mediterranean, Italy has today more than a hundred submarines. Until these submarines have been destroyed, Soviet sea lanes in the Black Sea will be in serious jeopardy.

All transports going to the Black Sea come through the Aegean Sea and the Dardanelles, which are favourable for the operations of submarines and mines laid along the lines of communication because the sea here is very narrow and has many islands.

We could later discuss how our forces in the Aegean Sea can combat this danger. We attach great importance to joint action against the Dodecanese Islands, which may be a base for Italian submarines.

In the North we must arrange for the protection of Soviet transports over a large area. We shall evidently have to mark off the spheres of operation for our forces, leaving the Orkneys as the Bri-

tish base, and Murmansk as the Soviet base. You will note therefore the volume of work that has to be done to achieve this goal.

We have today a Navy of tremendous strength. We are adding to it faster than ever before. We have annually been adding more than a hundred warships in recent years.

To be efficient, a fleet is largely dependent on trained personnel. In the last three years all our training establishments and centres providing the British Navy with personnel, have been filled to capacity.

All our squadrons are now ready for war at four hours' notice. They are at their war stations. Besides, we have recently mobilized our reserve fleet of more than 130 warships. These ships are not yet manned with their full crews, as we have not yet called up all our reservists. They have between 75 per cent and 90 per cent of their full complement. (I don't have precise figures, because not all reservists have been called up.) But they can be mobilized in less than two days. The ships are fully mobilized with complete supplies of ammunition; there is only a shortage of personnel.

As concerns our merchant shipping, which performs the major task of bringing supplies to us and our allies, we are building merchant ships today whose tonnage exceeds by 1,000,000 tons that which we have had at any time since the war. We have also the advantage of having the modern French Navy and Merchant Marine at the disposal of the Allied command.

CAPTAIN WILLAUME: The French Fleet is practically on the same footing as the British and is at its war stations. The action of the French Navy will be by decision of the French and British Command in accordance with the distribution of their zones. Their joint and particular operations will be decided according to the dispositions of the enemy fleets.

The French Fleet is modern and fast enough. Its cruisers, flotilla leaders, destroyers and submarines are trained for distant operations. This training has been emphasized by the Navy in recent years.

ADMIRAL DRAX: The plan of co-operation for the Navies of Britain and France was worked out for the main aim. This conforms to the basic principle of naval strategy, meaning that we shall have to concentrate our forces in order to smash the enemy fleet at the very outset.

As an example, I would speak of operations against enemy submarines. You will remember that in the last war we were in great difficulty when German submarines had nearly cut our sea communications. That happened not because the British Navy was incapable of dealing with this menace; but simply because we never foresaw the possibility of Germany violating all international laws, and sinking without warning allied and neutral vessels and murdering their crews on the high seas.

As soon as this happened, we took the necessary steps. At the end of the war, Germany was building submarines in all her shipyards

as fast as she could. Yet the allied navies were sinking those submarines faster than Germany could produce them. In the last 20 years we have not stood still. We consider that today we can deal with that menace more effectively than in 1918.

I think that I have given an adequate outline of our naval intentions. In the event of the Soviet Union's becoming our ally, we shall have to discuss a considerable number of points concerning naval co-operation.

This is all I wanted to say.

I now suggest that we discuss the programme for tomorrow. I propose that we begin with our questions concerning the exposition of the plan made today by Army Commander Shaposhnikov.

I presume also that we should get an answer from the Soviet Mission on the three principles which were submitted to the Soviet Mission by General Doumenc. I suggest that we discuss this point, because we here can easily come to an agreement with the Soviet Union. It would be of great importance to define several points on which we could reach agreement.

After discussion of these two questions Air Marshal Burnett and General Valin will be ready to present the operational plan of their air forces. If all concur, we shall now close our meeting.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: Before the meeting is closed, I should like to take the floor for two minutes.

The Soviet Military Mission is grateful to the Chairman and head of the British Military Mission, Admiral Drax, for the thorough outline of Anglo-French naval action.

As regards tomorrow's agenda, it seems more useful to me to hear the communications of the representatives of the Anglo-French Air Force, so as to have a complete picture of the common action of all the armed forces of the future allies.

With regard to the reply concerning the three principles which were submitted to us by the head of the French Mission, General Doumenc, this can be made at tomorrow's meeting if my proposal is accepted, after hearing the communications of the British Air Marshal and the French Air Force General.

We have no objection to closing the meeting.

ADMIRAL DRAX: We are in agreement on tomorrow's programme. Thank you for the consideration with which today's meeting was conducted.

I declare the meeting closed.

No. 418. Telegram from the Head of the French Military Mission to the War Ministry of France

Moscow, August 15, 1939

I am submitting a report on the fifth meeting.

It was devoted to a detailed survey of the Soviet Armed Forces and plans, with account being taken of various possible alternatives and of the highly effective assistance which they are fully determined to give us. The main condition concerning passage [of troops] through Polish territory, as set out in my telegram of yesterday, is still being defined. I would like to note the great importance, from the standpoint of removing Polish fears, of the fact that the Russians are very strictly limiting the zones of entry [by Soviet troops], taking an exclusively strategical viewpoint.

I am renewing my request for an urgent reply to the proposals contained in my code telegram No. 1.* Please see today's telegram from our Ambassador.

General *Doumenc*

From the archives of the Ministry
for Foreign Affairs of Germany.

No. 419. Telegram from the War Ministry of France to the Military Attaché of France in Warsaw **

August 15, 1939

Subject: Mission.

I have the honour to advise you that you are hereby authorized to inform the Polish General Staff about the negotiations now in progress in Moscow between the Military Mission of General Doumenc and the General Staff of the USSR.

Also please take note of such comments as may be made in connection with these negotiations by the Polish General Staff.

In case of necessity you have the permission to go to Moscow.

For the Minister, and on his
instructions, for the Chief of
the Army General Staff,
Army Chief of Staff General
Colson

From the archives of the
Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Germany.

* See Document No. 416.

** General F. Musse.

No. 420. Telegram from the Acting Military Attaché of the USSR in Japan to the General Staff of the Red Army

August 15, 1939

In June the Cabinet rejected the proposal of the military men calling for a military alliance with Germany and Italy⁵³ which would be directed against the democratic countries, and took a decision to strengthen the anti-Comintern pact,²⁴ i.e., the alliance against the USSR. Hoping to reach a compromise with England, the military were compelled temporarily to concur.

In view of the annulment of the treaty with America, the delay in negotiations with England and fears that the Japanese army by itself might not be able to deal with the USSR, the military have called for a review of last June's decision on a military alliance.

On August 8 this subject was discussed for five hours at a conference attended by five ministers. Important differences of opinion came to light and no decisions were taken. The discussions are to be continued on August 18.

Court and financial circles would agree to the conclusion of a military alliance against the USSR alone, but not against all the democratic countries, as Germany and Italy are demanding.

The overwhelming majority of the naval group are supporting the financial group. The internal forces are demanding an alliance without any conditions.

L. Mishin

From the archives.

No. 421. Telegram from the Ambassador of the USSR in France to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the USSR

August 16, 1939

At present attention is focused on the Burckhardt* mission. It has pushed into the background even the Salzburg rendezvous¹⁴¹ which, many people here believe, is closely connected with the Burckhardt mission. All who know Burckhardt rule out the possibility that he could have undertaken his trip without the knowledge and consent of London and Paris. The only difference of opinion concerns the source of the initiative. If no one has any further doubts as to the

* League of Nations High Commissioner in Danzig.

purpose of the mission, opinions differ as to what it has actually accomplished. It is known only that Burckhardt had summoned to Basel representatives of the Foreign Office and Quai d'Orsay (from here Arnal* travelled to see him) for the express purpose of familiarizing them with the results. This unusual method (which is incidentally concealed from the public) was suggested by Burckhardt himself. Judging by the reaction of the press close to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the results of the mission were not particularly promising. The entire press on the whole also took a negative view of the very idea of repeating the "Runciman experiment".¹²³ As a "*ballon d'essai*" the mission has failed. Small wonder that no one here wants to have anything to do with it.¹⁴⁴

There is also very little verified information about the Salzburg rendezvous. Did Italy really play the part of a restraining brake and suggest the idea of convening a conference? People are already talking about a new inspired *démarche* by the Vatican.

Ambassador

From the archives.

No. 422. Minute from an Official of Ribbentrop's Secretariat to the Permanent Liaison Officer of the German Foreign Ministry Attached to the Reich Chancellor

August 16, 1939

I enclose a letter from Mr. Charles Roden Buxton, the Labour Party's foreign policy expert, who is at present in Berlin. This letter contains proposals which he made to me orally in a conversation and then, at my request, put in writing.

Buxton emphasized that they were personal suggestions. For my part I told him that I also accepted them personally, and that I did not know whether the German authorities concerned would be interested in such proposals at the present time, especially as it was the holiday period just now.

T. C. P. Catchpool, who is accompanying Mr. Buxton, and whom I mentioned in my last Minute, indicated at the end of a conversation that Buxton knew Chamberlain and Halifax, and in particular was very closely associated with Butler. It might therefore be assumed that Buxton would not be making such proposals without a certain degree of approval from his Government.

Dr. Hetzler

* Head of the League of Nations Section of the French Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

August 14, 1939

In our conversation today I suggested to you the outlines of a possible settlement between Germany and England, and you asked me to write them down. I spoke purely as a private individual, and I must make it quite clear that I am not authorized to do so by any one else. But I hope I am a good European, I have studied European questions for many years, and I earnestly desire peace. What I said was this:—I believe a settlement is possible if it is a complete settlement of all outstanding questions at the same time; if it is announced to the public as one single whole; if it is on the basis of equality and of mutuality; and if definite and concrete steps are taken, on both sides, which will remove the present mistrust, and create a feeling of confidence that a completely new state of affairs is now beginning in Europe.

I would put my ideas in the following form:—If England agreed:

- a) to recognize East Europe as Germany's natural living space;
- b) to settle the colonial question by recognizing Germany's right to her former colonies, and immediately begin to set up a new system in Central Africa on the basis of the Berlin Conference (1885) with a new distribution of territory;
- c) to withdraw all methods of economic competition in East Europe other than the normal methods of trade and commerce;
- d) to withdraw all so-called "encircling" alliances in East Europe;
- e) to promote direct negotiation between Poland and Germany on Danzig and the Corridor;
- f) to make a new Naval Treaty;
- g) to make a general Disarmament Agreement, on a large scale, on a mutual basis, and with mutual inspection;

In such a case, would Germany then agree:

- a) to recognize the British Empire as England's natural living space;
- b) to enter into a system of European cooperation (for example a Conference of Germany, England, France, Italy, Poland, Spain) for the resettlement of Europe, with common guarantees for the new arrangements, and for the independence of all states;
- c) to withdraw any "encircling" agreements, if such exist, with Spain;
- d) to make a Declaration concerning the autonomy of the Pro-*tektorat*;
- e) to make a new Naval Treaty;
- f) to make a general Disarmament Agreement, on a large scale, on a mutual basis, and with mutual inspection.

Charles Roden Buxton

No. 423. Memorandum of a Conversation Between the Chief of the Foreign Policy Service of the German National-Socialist Party and an Official of the British Air Ministry

August 16, 1939

At 4 p.m. on August 16, Baron de Ropp called on me. He had been on a visit to the South of France and Corsica and had also been in London. He told me that in the last few days he had spoken to the officers of the British Air Staff and Air Ministry whom we knew. The views in these quarters were exactly the same as before. It was absurd for Germany and Britain to engage in a life and death combat on account of the Poles. As things were, the result could only be the destruction of each other's air forces, and, at the end of such a war, the destruction of the whole of European civilization, leaving Russia with her forces intact as the only beneficiary. The Poles were in fact urging the Foreign Office to march against Germany in full force in the event of a war with Germany. But precisely in view of the fact that at first the whole weight of the war would fall on the Air Force, the influence of the Air Ministry and the Air Staff was on the increase.

Baron de Ropp told me that because of their good knowledge, acquired over some years, of Germany and the National Socialist Movement, he and his friends did not believe that Germany—even after a victory in the East—intended to destroy Britain or France. He knew rather that the Führer and our Movement had always regarded the British Empire as an entity. Neither could he and his friends imagine that we wanted to annex any British Dominions, which I confirmed as being the view of the National Socialist Movement hitherto.

Baron de Ropp added that, in the event of war, he had been selected as political adviser on Germany to the Air Ministry, i.e., as intelligence officer to assess the political situation in Germany and the reports on Germany's intentions. He said he was telling me this in confidence on account of our long acquaintance, because he was firmly convinced that everything must be done to prevent war. But, judging from the present situation, he believed that, in the event of a warlike conflict between Germany and Poland, France and Britain would automatically be brought in. Even in this event, however, for the purpose of assessing such a conflict, the possibility of not letting it develop into a war of extermination for both sides must still be kept in mind. It might be that Germany would finish off Poland quickly, and that although at the time there would be a declaration of war, the war at that stage could still be conducted on both sides as a defensive war, i.e., that although the frontiers would be adequately defended by blockade and artillery, there would, however, be no aerial bombardment of open cities, which was bound to lead to irre-

vocable hatred. In the event of a speedy ending of a German-Polish conflict, there would, in this hypothesis, still be the possibility of a quick liquidation of the war, as the British Empire and Germany could not stake their whole existence for a State which would then have practically ceased to exist in its previous form.

As regards France, the feeling there was extremely warlike as compared with last year. In particular, hatred of Italy had greatly increased; Corsica was filled to overflowing with troops, and there was no doubt that the Corsicans themselves felt they were French. The question arose: if, in the event of a general conflict there were battles between the French and Italian Air Forces, would that automatically lead to general air warfare between Germany and Britain?

I took note of these statements, saying that I had just returned from leave and was not fully informed about the present state of affairs. De Ropp asked me: "Do you think that the Poles would become reasonable if pressure were exerted by Britain? What could be done about it?" At the same time he asked for detailed material, as authentic as possible, on the ill-treatment of Germans in Poland. I have given orders for this material to be available by tomorrow midday.

I told him that the Führer's first, conciliatory, proposal*—the return of Danzig, and a German highway between East Prussia and the Reich—had been brusquely rejected by the Poles, presumably because, through previous visits to London, they had already received from someone promises of firmer support. It could perhaps be said that the Poles were just gambling and had intentionally in the last few weeks intensified the persecutions of Germans to an extreme degree in order to provoke us, because they were not quite sure of Britain's help if they took military action by themselves. Thus, by these constant provocations in word and deed they probably hoped to force Germany to take some step or other, and thereby bring full British and French support automatically into operation. I think that it might well be said in Britain that the guarantee** had been given on other conditions than those now prevailing. For as things are now, the German Reich is being deliberately provoked by the Poles, and thus an attempt is really being made to make Britain play Poland's game. In judging the Poles there must also be taken into account a Slav element, which at certain moments loses all restraint and power of clear judgement and then, as it were in despair, lets things slide.

In conclusion, de Ropp emphasized that he himself knew quite well that, after establishing herself in the East—which his friends particularly advocated, because in this they saw for Britain's future not only no harm but an advantage—Germany had no subsequent designs on the British Empire. But, fostered by certain centres, this idea had become firmly fixed among many of the French and British, and it was not easy to eradicate it. He, personally, and his friends

* See Document No. 87.

** See Document No. 201.

also, saw matters clearly, and would do everything to stave off a disastrous outcome.

He said that he would be staying in Germany for about another eight to ten days.

I consider it my duty to inform the Führer of these statements emanating from the British Air Ministry, and of the views of those in the highest levels of the British Air Staff, especially as these views coincide with what they have so far publicly stated in their newspapers.

A. Rosenberg

From *Documents on German Foreign Policy*.
1918-1945, Series D, Vol. VII, pp. 81-83.

No. 424. Letter from the French Ministry for Foreign Affairs
to the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of France

August 16, 1939

The Franco-Anglo-Russian Military Negotiations.

Observations by M. Naggiar.

I have the honour to enclose herewith a memorandum reproducing the observations communicated to me by our Ambassador in Moscow on August 15 concerning the progress of the military negotiations being conducted at the present time between France, Great Britain and the USSR.

I would be indebted to you if you would be so kind as to regard these observations as being strictly confidential.

For the Minister for Foreign
Affairs,
Vice-Director for European
Affairs,

Minister A. Hoppenot

MINUTE

FRANCO-ANGLO-RUSSIAN MILITARY NEGOTIATIONS

According to a dispatch from our Ambassador in Moscow, what the Russian Government is proposing by way of implementing the obligations under a political treaty is consistent, in General Doumenc's opinion, with the interests of our security and the security of Poland herself.

Far from seeking to exploit the negotiations in order to obtain our

effective support in the West in exchange for limited support on its part in the East, the USSR is offering us, in M. Naggiar's opinion, quite definite assistance in the East, without advancing additional demands in the West, but on condition that by her negative attitude Poland should not make it impossible to create a resistance front in the East with the participation of Russian forces. In the event of failure in this matter the Russians are not claiming that we should give them support in the West so long as Poland, owing to her negative attitude, keeps them at a distance from operations in the East. Indeed, they declare that in this case the military negotiations, and consequently also the political treaty, one of whose basic aims is the rendering of assistance to Poland by the Soviet Union, would be meaningless.

One could hardly find anything to counter this statement which leads us to the very crux of the matter, writes our Ambassador in Moscow on this score. Even if the Russians were to reconcile themselves to the fact that in the East provision would be made only for limited assistance and simple measures arising out of a temporizing position which, according to their instructions, the French and English Missions are to insist on, the Polish question, in M. Naggiar's opinion, still could not be avoided, not to mention the Rumanian question. And finally, there would arise complex problems of transit, supply and communications, and they would prove insoluble without the participation or tacit agreement of the Warsaw Government.

To talk about the complexity of the situation in order to camouflage the urgent need to achieve results in Moscow without the consent of Poland to which we have given a guarantee* to allow us to attain a more precise definition of the terms of Russian support, without which our guarantee might prove to be too onerous or ineffective, would in M. Naggiar's opinion, be tantamount to trying to build castles in the sand.

In offering Poland a guarantee, we should have predicated that guarantee on Soviet support which we consider to be necessary. The circumstances which justified that decision in the spring, undoubtedly appear to be more favourable at present. In any case, in the opinion of our Ambassador in Moscow, it is essential that the Poles should now realize, before it is too late, the necessity of their adopting a less negative attitude.

In this connection Naggiar believes that General Doumenc should be accorded complete confidence and that, without laying down any restrictions, apart from those dictated by his own experience, we should empower him to discuss all the problems relating to the effective participation of Russian forces in the struggle against aggression in the East.

The future Military Convention must of course be submitted for approval to the Governments concerned. Therefore it cannot be concluded in its full extent without the consent of the Poles in so far as the French Government could give its final agreement only after it

* See Document No. 229.

had been in touch with Warsaw on this matter. In this connection Naggiar recalls that General Huntziger alone concluded the Convention with Turkey and that the British Government approved it afterwards.

The main point at this stage, says our Ambassador in Moscow in conclusion, is to move forward the military negotiations with the USSR and not to permit a breakdown due to our refusal to discuss seriously the actual problems connected with the question of Russian support in the East.

From the archives of the Ministry for
Foreign Affairs of Germany

No. 425. Record of the Meeting of the Military Missions of the USSR, Britain and France

August 16, 1939

Opened at 10.25 a.m.

Adjourned at 1.55 p.m.

GENERAL DOUMENC (in the chair): I declare the meeting open. Admiral Drax will make a statement.

ADMIRAL DRAX: I apologize for our delegation being late today. After we arrived at the Embassy we had to formulate some of the questions which are of interest to us. I should like to ask a few naval questions after the interval. But there is one question I want to ask now, because all the others hinge upon it. The Soviet Mission will perhaps be able to answer it now, or after the interval.

GENERAL DOUMENC: I call on General Heywood.

GENERAL HEYWOOD: We should like to know what number and description of Franco-British naval forces you propose should take part in the operations in the Baltic?

GENERAL DOUMENC: The agenda of our meeting today includes comments by the Soviet delegation on the principles submitted to it. I should like to ask Marshal Voroshilov whether he can make his comments now.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: As regards the first question, raised by General Heywood, I hope you will allow me to answer it a bit later. As regards the second, asked by the Chairman, I understand that we agreed yesterday first to hear the statements about the British and French Air Forces and then proceed to the principles submitted by the French Mission.

GENERAL DOUMENC: Possibly there was some misunderstanding. We may have misunderstood each other, but I see no objection to starting now with the air force statement.

I call on Air Marshal Burnett who will make a statement on the British Air Force.

AIR MARSHAL BURNETT: The general policy is that the British Air Forces, aside from those stationed in Singapore, Aden, the Mediterranean, the Suez Canal, India and the Dominions, should be employed in co-operating with the French forces on the Western Front.

What are the military objectives of vital importance to us today? A part of the fighter force will remain on the British Isles to destroy those enemy forces which may attack Britain. Our fighter force will, in that event, be assisted by the entire system of our anti-aircraft defences—the searchlight units, barrage balloons and sound-rangers.

Arrangements have been made for part of our air force to operate from French territory, where airfields have been prepared for it. You will understand that this is a major strategic advantage, since it extends the operational range of our aircraft.

Our air bases in Britain are protected in the best possible way. We have been continuously improving their anti-aircraft defences since 1917, so that today the efficiency is extremely high.

Our bomber force can operate deep in Germany's rear. Bombers from bases in England can keep up a continuous attack on the German rear, because we are going to have all the resources of British industry behind us. Furthermore, we have the additional advantage of having a large number of well-trained air mechanics. This is a great help in the problem of supplies and maintenance. Questions of supply and aircraft maintenance are much easier solved when our aircraft operate from English bases, rather than from forward bases (France, the Mediterranean coast), which involve upkeep of lines of communication. From these bases, both the ones on the British Isles and in France, we can reach all important objectives in Germany.

You probably know from press reports about the long flights we have made from the British Isles to the Mediterranean, Marseilles among other places, and back. This was not done just once, but several times.

The British Air Force is getting stronger each day. It is not only the industrial output that is growing, but the output of pilots and air mechanics as well. We attach great importance to our air mechanics who are responsible for aircraft maintenance. The problem of proper aircraft exploitation is getting to be increasingly difficult as the aircraft are improved.

We are against building more aircraft of the first line than we can maintain during the war. We hold the view that we should have as many aircraft of the first line as we can maintain continuously for a long period with presently available reserves. We prefer to have 1,000 first-line aircraft and to maintain that number during six months of war, rather than several thousand first-line aircraft which we shall not be able to maintain.

It may interest the Soviet Air Force to know that today the first-line air force at home has more than 3,000 aircraft. This excludes training aircraft and aircraft earmarked for the overseas air forces. But

the figure I have just named does not give a real idea of the tremendous possibilities of the British Air Force in wartime. We attach great importance to bomber operations being continuous and long-term. The state of our industry and the efficiency of our personnel (pilots and mechanics) rounds out the general picture of our air force.

I shall now deal with the system of training personnel. We have about 15 training schools for advanced pilots. From these advanced training schools the pilots are sent directly to the squadrons. Selection proceeds as follows. We select young people physically fit for service in the air force. They undergo initial training in schools. Some of them, those who pass the tests of piloting aircraft, then go to the above-mentioned schools, which are of two categories. The first category are schools where personnel is trained in handling modern aircraft equipment. In schools of the second category they are taught the war uses of aircraft (bombing, air photography, firing). Pilots better suited for the fighter force are sent to fighter squadrons. Pilots better suited for long-range reconnaissance and bombing are sent, respectively, to the reconnaissance and bomber squadrons. And pilots best suited for army co-operation undergo short-term courses in this line before being sent to their units.

In wartime, the number of these schools will rise steeply. The existing organization enables us to make this extension. If war breaks out tomorrow we can do it at once.

Furthermore, we have training schools for air mechanics. Their number is being increased and there are many schools in the process of formation. There are also civil schools at aircraft factories. We send our air mechanics to the factories, so that they familiarize themselves with the latest types of aircraft as these come into production. These mechanics are also drafted from field units and training depots. After five years of service some of the pilots join the reserve. This has enabled us to build up a large reserve force.

As regards the capacity of our aviation factories, I can cite the following figures: output today exceeds 700 aircraft per month. This does not include civilian and training planes. I do not have precise output figures for civilian planes and therefore speak only of warplanes. No increase has been made in the usual number of shifts at the factories. Most factories work one shift and some two.

In the event of war, this industry will be able to produce considerably more. We have very large untapped industrial reserves which we shall use in the event of war. There are today many factories producing motorcars, motor-cycles and other peace-time goods which may in wartime be adapted to turning out military aircraft.

From what I have said you can get an idea of Britain's air power. By the end of the last war we had the most powerful air force in the world. There were more than 22,000 aircraft in our squadrons and units. This does not mean, of course, that they could all go up simultaneously.

In any case, I can confidently say that if war were to break out in the near future we would begin it under more favourable conditions

than the last war. I am certain that we shall achieve more surprising results than we had by the end of the last war.

At present we have a system of uninterrupted supply for our bomber, fighter and reconnaissance air forces. We are taking steps to increase the output of all necessary materials (fuel, lubricants, etc.), and to build up required stocks so as to facilitate extension of this supply during the war.

I have now briefly outlined the state of the British Air Force and told you what it can do. I hope that very soon we shall discuss the best ways of employing the tremendous air power of the USSR, France and Great Britain.

GENERAL DOUMENC thanks Air Marshal Burnett for his communication, and is joined in this by Marshal Voroshilov and Admiral Drax.

The Chairman announces a 15-minute interval.

(AFTER THE INTERVAL)

GENERAL DOUMENC: The session is resumed. General Valin will speak about the French Air Force.

GENERAL VALIN: I want to give a description of the French Air Force.

I shall begin with the organization of materiel in order to meet General Loktionov's wishes and to reply to his questions. I shall follow the same principle as Air Marshal Burnett. I want to begin with materiel, then proceed to personnel, organization of bases and airfields, mobilization, the system of various services, and shall wind up with air operations on the Western Front. But before I do so, allow me to make two points. First, I shall speak only of aircraft of the first line, in other words, of aircraft which can be mobilized at once and have the personnel, armament, supplies and spare parts. It must be borne in mind that first-line aircraft have a corresponding reserve. This is set at 200 per cent for the fighter force and at 100 per cent for all other types. For example, when I speak of 100 fighters of the first line, this means that there is a reserve of 200 aircraft which can perform combat missions. Secondly, speaking of the air force I shall only refer to the air force available in France and North Africa and not to the various air forces located in the colonies. Their task is to defend the colonies, but in case of need they may be used to reinforce the main force.

M a t e r i e l. The number of first-line aircraft today is about 2,000, of which two-thirds are modern aircraft with fighter speeds of 450 to 500 kilometres per hour and with improved armaments, and bomber speeds of 400 to 450 kilometres per hour with a range of 800 to 1,000 kilometres and a bomb load of 1,000 to 2,500 kilograms.

This force has lately been developing fast thanks to our industrial resources. In 1940, our air force is to have 3,000 first-line aircraft.

To round out the question of our materiel, I must say that the mobilization of French industry will enable us to maintain the number

of first-line aircraft at its present level. Within three months after the outbreak of war the number of aircraft produced will exceed possible losses and will grow at a rate comparable to the last war.

P e r s o n n e l. As in all technical military services, the problem of air force personnel is the most difficult to solve. The methods whereby we train personnel for our air force are the following.

Pre-call up training. Training in public aviation organizations is undergone by young people who want to learn flying. This is carried out by civil aero clubs, which teach them to handle light aircraft.

Young people who want to specialize in various branches of aviation are trained in schools run by aero clubs.

Finally such training is carried out at military flying schools, whose number is increasing all the time.

Air mechanics, ordnance mechanics, mechanics for special equipment, and electricians are trained at specialized military schools. I cite no figures because, compared to what Air Marshal Burnett has told you, they would not give the correct impression bearing in mind that our methods are different. For each line we have basic schools, which are filled to capacity, though not, it is true, for every speciality, but only for pilots, air mechanics and ordnance mechanics. Besides, there are other possibilities of obtaining technical personnel for our air force.

T r a i n i n g o f r e s e r v e s. All reservists are trained either in active units, and are in that case viewed as personnel of the active air force, or in special reserve training centres where they undergo advanced training either voluntarily or compulsorily.

O r g a n i z a t i o n o f l a n d b a s e s. Besides peacetime bases, we have set up wartime bases. Considerable effort has been devoted to this lately. At present, we have bases throughout France designed to accommodate the entire French and British Air Forces. These bases have been built with an eye to the various military alternatives which arise from the assumptions described here. Each base is capable of handling not less than 20 aircraft and has all the necessary means of supply.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: Are they bases which fully provide for continuous war operations or bases where pilots can land to rest, refuel, and fly on?

GENERAL VALIN: I shall now tell you what these bases have. They have every means of supply, such as underground fuel storage tanks with all the necessary mechanisms for rapid refueling, ammunition dumps, means of communication such as an underground telephone exchange, stocks of camouflage material (paint, canvas, netting) and several thousand square metres of steel meshes for rapid repair of bombed runways. Besides, there are ground units called service companies. These are available at all the bases, whether aircraft are present or not. Their purpose is to organize defence of the airfield and to serve the needs and requirements of the air units which occupy, or are to occupy, it.

M o b i l i z a t i o n. The entire air force can be put on a war foot-

ing at 4 hours' notice. What does this mean? Upon receiving orders the military air force is deconcentrated so as not to expose itself to bombardment. It is deployed at points which are not operative bases, but special deconcentration airfields. This is done to prevent the enemy from learning the location of the operational airfields at the start of the war.

Services. The air force services are organized much the same as those of the ground forces. Some of them, like the medical service, are absolutely identical.

The fuel and munitions supply services are organized very thoroughly. They include underground munition dumps at the bases. The more important of the stores are also underground. They are supplied by railway or motor roads operative in peace time. Time-tables for rail movements are provided for in the transport plans. In addition, supplies also come in by motor transport. They are serviced by special units known as companies. There are fuel supply companies, for example, and munitions supply companies. These are equipped with the latest means of communication and all other technical means, such as pumps and lorry winches for loading and unloading munitions. All these companies exist today. They will be doubled in the early period of the war by requisitioning lorries and cars. For example, a good number of lorries may be taken from the fuel industry.

I proceed to the general question of employment of the air force. The French Air Force Command intends to exploit to the full the possibilities of the air force in order to concentrate aircraft as quickly as possible where they are needed.

For this purpose the air force has bases on the territories of France and North Africa, of which I have spoken. Their number is not less than three for every unit of 20 aircraft. All these bases and their supplies are operational in all war situations. Their location in relation to the front line depends on the war theatre. It will be different in the Alps as compared with the north of France.

Thanks to this organization there is no need to move the stationary equipment and the servicing personnel. This enables us to concentrate at points already available.

Therefore, if we need technical personnel, it may be transferred by air, since their point of destination will have a few days' supply of all necessities.

It is thus possible to move the operational centre of the air forces as the situation demands to the point where it is most needed at any given time.

Moreover, this organization facilitates protection from enemy air attacks, particularly bomber attacks. The fact that there are service companies at the airfields enables the aircraft quickly to move to other bases if an airfield is destroyed or an attack is imminent. This is also a great advantage.

The bases were built at great cost, but the outlay was unavoidable. As a result, every air force unit has three fully equipped bases.

Today we have an adequate number of these bases to accommo-

date the French Air Force and also the British Air Force which is going to operate from French territory. We have provided that, as the French Air Force expands, this principle of three bases for each aircraft unit will be preserved.

Hence, what I have said about the French Air Force differs little from Air Marshal Burnett's statement about the British Air Force. Both our air forces have been trained for joint action, and a good number of French bombers has already made flights over Britain.

The fighter force, which acts hand in hand with anti-aircraft artillery, defends the most vital objectives against enemy air attacks. In particular, it covers the most vital objectives whose destruction may affect the development of war operations, such as railway junctions, motor roads, bridges, concentrations of land and air forces, and industrial plants vital for defence needs.

The bomber force is intended to destroy exclusively military objectives in enemy territory, and is to avoid action against the civil population and civil buildings. The objectives of our bomber force are those which the enemy defends with his fighter units and anti-aircraft artillery. Bomber objectives are evidently the same in all countries.

The order of attack on various targets is a very complex question. It may be solved only in accordance with concrete operations at any given time on any given front.

That is the end of my statement.

GENERAL DOUMENC thanks General Valin on behalf of the meeting for his *exposé*.

(Marshal Voroshilov and Admiral Drax also thank General Valin).

GENERAL DOUMENC: May we have a reply now to the question asked by the Admiral?

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: I ask the Admiral and the conference for permission to make our reply at the next session.

From the archives. Published in
International Affairs, 1959,
No. 3, pp. 143-148.

No. 426. Record of the Meeting of the Military Missions of the USSR, Britain and France

August 16, 1939

(Continued)

GENERAL DOUMENC: According to our programme the Soviet delegation is to give its comments on the three principles. Could I ask the Marshal to do so now?

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: The Soviet Military Mission has made thorough study of the three principles submitted to it by the head of the French Military Mission, General Doumenc.

These three principles concerning the organization of the defence of the contracting parties are much too universal, abstract and immaterial, and do not bind anyone to anything. I naturally share them, since there is little one can say against them. But they do not represent anything concrete and could serve as material solely for some abstract declaration, whereas we have not gathered here to adopt some general declaration, but rather to work out a concrete military convention fixing the number of divisions, guns, tanks, aircraft, naval squadrons, etc., to act jointly in the defence of the contracting Powers.

This is our reply to the three principles submitted.

GENERAL DOUMENC: I want to say to the Marshal that he has been rather hard on my principles.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: The harshness of my answer is dictated by the harshness of the present military and political situation. Just two days ago, Admiral Drax stated that Germany had two million men under arms and ready to start operations on August 15, that is yesterday, against one of the peaceful nations. Although Admiral Drax's forecast happily has not come true, the tension of the political situation in Europe has not diminished; on the contrary, it has increased. It follows that the meetings of the Military Missions of Britain, France and the USSR, if they seriously wish to arrive at a concrete decision for common action against aggression, should not waste time on meaningless declarations, and should decide this basic question as quickly as possible.

GENERAL DOUMENC: I want to follow the advice Marshal Voroshilov has given me and suggest that we amend these points on the strength of what has yesterday been set out by Army Commander Shaposhnikov, the Chief of the General Staff. Someone should be deputed to write the draft and to submit the new proposal for discussion.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: I do not think that the time has yet arrived to prepare any document. We have not solved what is for the Soviet side the cardinal question that is, the question of the right of passage for the Soviet Armed Forces on Polish and Rumanian territory for joint action by the contracting parties against the common enemy.

Only after a favourable solution of that question could we proceed to discuss the plans outlined here by the representatives of the three Military Missions.

Up to now we have merely exchanged communications. I personally presume that this is only the beginning of our concrete conversations about fixing the number of troops to be provided by each party, and their use against aggression in Europe.

GENERAL DOUMENC: Would the Marshal agree that in order to save time, figures should be specified in a preliminary draft of the paragraphs (articles) of a Convention?

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: It seems to me that until our Soviet Mission receives a reply to our question, now known to all, which the

Missions of Great Britain and France have communicated to their Governments, all preliminary work is, to a certain extent, useless.

GENERAL DOUMENC: I take note of what the Marshal has said and suggest that we proceed to the question of what we are going to do at the next meeting. Could we hear the communication of the Chief of the Air Force, General Loktionov, about the air arm of the Red Army, which is still due?

In addition to the questions I have submitted to the Marshal in writing, there are a few more we should like to ask the Soviet Mission with the Marshal's permission, and to which we should be very pleased to receive replies. They are formulated in English and I shall now give them to my neighbour (he hands them to General Heywood).

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: Would it not be better to give the questions to us in writing? I take it that our Mission will be allowed to reply to them at one of the next few meetings. We shall fulfil the Chairman's wish concerning the statement about the Air Force of the Soviet Union, because the Soviet Mission does not want to be in debt to the French and British Missions.

GENERAL DOUMENC: If there is no objection from the Marshal and the Admiral, I suggest that we have our next meeting tomorrow.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: I should like General Doumenc and Admiral Drax to inform us when approximately they expect to get the reply to our question from their Governments?

GENERAL DOUMENC: As soon as possible.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: If the answer which the British and French Missions expect is delayed for long, it seems to me that after our communication about the Soviet Air Force we shall have to interrupt our meetings pending receipt of the reply.

GENERAL DOUMENC: Aside from the communication by General Loktionov, I should also like to hear the answers to the questions just submitted to the Marshal because they are very important.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: They may be very important, but we have not as yet studied them. We must look into them, and will then be able to say whether we are going to reply to them before receiving the answer from the British and French Governments, or whether we are going to do so after receiving it.

ADMIRAL DRAX: I have no means of forming an opinion on when the answer will be received from the Government, because that depends on the Government.

GENERAL DOUMENC: I want you to tell us at tomorrow's meeting when the Soviet Mission will be able to reply to the questions we have asked—now or later. I think that perhaps we could carry on with our work on the assumption that the answer to the question of the Soviet Military Mission will be in the affirmative.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: I am sorry to say that our Mission will not be able to carry on until we know for sure, rather than assume, how the Governments of Britain and France conceive our part in joint action against the aggressor.

GENERAL DOUMENC: I think we can adjourn for today and gather again tomorrow at 10 o'clock.

The proposal is accepted.

MILITARY QUESTIONS TO THE SOVIET MILITARY MISSION

1) What is the opinion of the Soviet Military Mission on the possibility of Italy coming into the war?

a) If the Soviet Union has signed a Pact with France and Britain?

b) If the Soviet Union has not signed a Pact with us? If the opinion of the Soviet Military Mission is that Italy will probably enter the war what is their view of Italy's possible action, operating from Albania?

2) Of the three alternative courses of action outlined by the Soviet Military Mission, which in their opinion is the most probable course of action which will be adopted by Germany?

3) Can the Soviet Military Mission give more precise details of the areas of Rumanian territory into which they think it necessary to have a right of access and in which they wish to operate?

4) In alternative course No. 2 what does the Soviet Union propose to do if Bulgaria is joined with Hungary against Rumania. In this case what help can they give to Turkey?

5) What regular traffic tonnage can be sent by railway to Poland,

a) from Murmansk,

b) from the Black Sea?

By what railways can it be directed in order to interfere as little as possible with the supply of the Russian Army?

6) What Soviet port(s) of the Black Sea can we use for the transport of supplies to the Russo-Polish-Rumanian front?

7) (a) If the question of the passage of Soviet troops into Poland is decided in accordance with the wishes expressed by the Soviet Military Mission, is the Soviet Union agreeable to participate in providing supplies, armaments, raw materials and other industrial material for Poland?

(b) The same question for Rumania.

8) What supplies of refined petroleum products could the USSR supply in war? Would sufficient tanker vessels be available for transshipment?

STATEMENT TO BE MADE AT THE END OF THESE QUESTIONS

We have prepared a few questions on Soviet air policy, but as the Soviet air plans are shortly to be expounded and that what is then

said may answer some of these questions, we propose to postpone all air questions until the Soviet air plans are known.

NAVAL QUESTION

What description and number of Franco-British naval forces do you propose should operate in the Baltic?

From the archives. Published in
International Affairs, 1959,
No. 3, pp. 148-150.

No. 427. Memorandum of a Conversation Between the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR and the Ambassador of the USA in the USSR

August 16, 1939

Steinhardt says he trusts that Comrade Molotov has received a report on Comrade Umansky's conversation with Roosevelt. * Comrade Molotov replies in the affirmative.

Steinhardt then requests Comrade Molotov to keep what he will tell him today a secret.

Roosevelt, Steinhardt begins, wants all he has said to Umansky to be understood correctly. What he wants to communicate today to Comrade Molotov is an account of Roosevelt's unbiased, though personal views concerning the present-day international situation. Steinhardt emphasizes that an account of these views does not constitute an official statement by Roosevelt and once again speaks of the confidential nature of the conversation. Steinhardt says that in wishing to make his views known Roosevelt is not trying to give advice and that these views are arrived at independently of the policy of any other country. Roosevelt is not in a position to accept any responsibility or give any assurance concerning the steps that England and France intend to take in connection with their negotiations with the USSR. After this introduction, Steinhardt proceeds with his account of Roosevelt's views. In the event of war in Europe and in the Far East and of a victory of the Axis countries, the situation of the USSR and the USA would undoubtedly change. In the event of a victory of the Axis countries the situation of the USSR, owing to its geographical proximity to Germany, would change more rapidly than the situation of the

* See Document No. 359.

USA. For this reason Roosevelt feels that if a satisfactory agreement against aggression was achieved between any other European powers it would have a stabilizing effect in the interests of universal peace in which the USA and the USSR are deeply interested.

Comrade Molotov observes that judging by the statement made by Steinhardt, he (Steinhardt) has evidently been instructed to expound Roosevelt's views.

Steinhardt replies in the affirmative and asks Comrade Molotov whether what he has said coincides in general with what Roosevelt told Comrade Umansky.

Comrade Molotov confirms this and states that the Soviet Government is extremely interested in these views of Roosevelt's and considers them highly valuable.

Steinhardt requests Comrade Molotov, if he considers it possible, to set out, for transmission to Roosevelt, the views of the Soviet Government on the present international situation and on the negotiations between the USSR, England and France.

Comrade Molotov states that the Soviet Government takes a most serious attitude towards the situation in Europe and towards its negotiations with England and France. We attach great significance to these negotiations, says Comrade Molotov, as may be seen from the amount of time we have given them. From the very beginning we have approached these negotiations not as something that would end with the adoption of some general declaration. We feel it would be wrong, and for us it would be unacceptable, to limit ourselves to a declaration. Consequently, we insist, as we have done from the moment the negotiations started, on discussing concrete obligations for mutual assistance to counter possible aggression in Europe. We are not interested in making declaratory statements in the negotiations but in arriving at concrete decisions on mutual obligations to counter possible aggression. For us these negotiations are important in that their purpose is to work out defensive measures to be taken in the event of aggression; we would not agree to participate in compacts to attack anybody. Consequently, we value these negotiations in so far as they may be instrumental in securing agreement on mutual assistance for defence against direct and indirect aggression. I know, Comrade Molotov continues, that the USA refrains from direct participation in European affairs, but I also know that Roosevelt takes the interests of universal peace close to heart. The Soviet Government will therefore display the keenest interest in the statement which Steinhardt has communicated to us and which expresses Roosevelt's personal views.

Steinhardt then asks whether Comrade Molotov is hopeful of a successful completion of the negotiations, for Roosevelt will be asking Steinhardt for his opinion of the negotiations but his opinion would be of no value.

Comrade Molotov replies that we have been spending and are continuing to spend a good deal of time on the negotiations precisely because we are counting on the success of the negotiations. But it goes without saying that the matter does not depend on us alone.

Steinhardt indicates the reasons that have prompted him to raise this question. Clearly, Steinhardt says, Molotov will agree with him that Roosevelt has to be prepared for the eventuality of the negotiations coming to an end, especially if they are unsuccessful. Steinhardt emphasizes that this is merely his own personal opinion. Comrade Molotov says that the outcome of the negotiations does not depend on us alone, it also depends on England and France. Much has already been done to ensure the success of the negotiations but the negotiations have not yet been concluded.

Steinhardt says that he appreciates Comrade Molotov's frankness. He asks that today's conversation be kept secret as Comrade Molotov evidently knows about the American Congress, the American newspapers and the Isolationists that are hampering Roosevelt's efforts to keep the peace. Steinhardt asks that none of the messages which Roosevelt may communicate to Comrade Molotov be made public. Comrade Molotov, noting that he is aware of the difficulties which Roosevelt encounters in his work, says that he will comply with the Ambassador's request.

From the archives.

No. 428. Telegram from the Soviet Chargé d'Affaires in Germany to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the USSR

August 16, 1939

From a conversation with the Italian Chargé d'Affaires who participated in the Salzburg talks,¹⁴¹ it follows that:

The Danzig question was not discussed in isolation but as part of the general problem of the redivision of the world. The Italian emphasized that at present the matter concerned not just Danzig alone but Poland as a whole, and that the latter's prospects were extremely bleak, regardless of which side was victorious.

The Chargé d'Affaires admitted that Italy's role could be regarded as a restraining one in the sense that Italy had not lost all hope for a peaceful settlement, and on these lines she attempted to influence Germany for which Danzig had by now become a question of prestige—something that was not to the liking of the Italians.

In any event, the situation was so tense that the likelihood of a world war was by no means excluded. All this should be resolved within three weeks at the most.

Chargé d'Affaires

From the archives.

No. 429. Record of the Meeting of the Military Missions of the USSR, Britain and France

August 17, 1939

Opened at 10.07 a.m.

Adjourned at 1.43 p.m.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV (in the chair): I declare the meeting of Military Missions open.

At today's session we are to hear a communication about the Soviet Air Force. If there is no other business on hand, I take the liberty of giving the floor to the Chief of the Red Army Air Force, Army Commander II Loktionov.

ARMY COMMANDER II LOKTIONOV: The Chief of the Red Army General Staff, Army Commander I Shaposhnikov, has already told you in his report that the Red Army will deploy from 5,000 to 5,500 warplanes on the West European Front. This number applies to the first-line air force, which excludes the reserve.

Of this number 80 per cent is modern aircraft with the following speeds: fighters—465 to 575 kilometres per hour and more, and bombers—460 to 550 kilometres per hour. The range of the bombers is 1,800 to 4,000 kilometres, and the bomb load—from 600 kilograms for the older types to 2,500 kilograms.

Air Marshal Burnett said that real capacity to replace first-line aircraft in wartime is more important than the nominal total of the latter. He is right in the sense that the output capacity of the aviation industry should be able to meet wartime aircraft losses. This is highly important. But it is not going to hurt us to have at least as many aircraft in the first line as the probable enemies. The side which enters the war with a superior air force will unquestionably have a big edge over the enemy.

The proportion between bombers, fighters and army co-operation aircraft is: bombers 55 per cent, fighters 40 per cent, and army co-operation 5 per cent.

The Soviet aviation factories are at present working one shift, and only a few of them two. They produce an average of 900 to 950 warplanes a month, aside from civilian and training craft.

In view of growing aggression in Europe and the East, our aircraft industry has taken steps to raise production to an extent that will cover war needs.

Personnel. We have the following system of training air force pilots and air mechanics. Young men physically fit for service in the air force undergo preliminary training in training aircraft at aero clubs and further training at one- or two-year aviation schools. Pilots and observers are trained at 19 aviation schools, and mechanics of all types at eight technical aviation schools. Furthermore, there are four schools for advanced flying and technical training. All in all, there are 33 schools. The existing technical schools have courses of supplemen-

tary technical training. All the schools are filled to capacity and provide personnel for the air force and accumulate the reserve.

We have an Air Academy for the higher training of air force commanders and engineers.

In addition, civil aviation has its own training schools for pilots and technicians not only for its own personnel but to accumulate the reserve. Refresher courses for trained reservists, pilots and technicians, are conducted systematically at training centres and reserve units.

E m p l o y m e n t. The main air force units will be ready for action, from 1 to 4 hours after the alarm. Units on duty are continuously at their war stations.

In the early period of the war air force operations will follow the plans of the General Staff. The general principle of the operations is determined by the need to concentrate all efforts, both on land and in the air, in the main battle. Hence, air operations will be conducted in close co-operation with the land forces in the battlefield and the whole depth of the battle zone.

Bomber targets are: the enemy's manpower and some of his important military objectives. Furthermore, bombers will be ordered to operate against military objectives deeper in the enemy's rear. The Soviet Air Force has no intention of bombing the civilian population.

Aside from defending a number of vital military objectives, railways and highways, covering army and air force concentrations, and defending major towns in close co-operation with other means of anti-aircraft defence, such as anti-aircraft artillery, etc., the fighter force is to come to grips with the enemy air force, facilitate bombing operations and co-operate with attack aircraft on the battlefield.

Aircraft are based on operational airfields; this and the manner in which the bases operate facilitate flexible manoeuvring of air forces both laterally and in depth, avoiding wasteful redeployments of air units.

I have finished what I had to say.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: The next speaker is Marshal Burnett.

MARSHAL BURNETT: I should like to thank General Loktionov on behalf of the French and British Missions for his precise statement. I was much impressed by the unity and determination which have enabled the Soviet Union to build up such a fine air force.

If you'll permit me, I have one or two questions I should like to ask later to clear up a few points in General Loktionov's communication.

GENERAL VALIN: Could I ask a few questions, since I did not grasp a few places in General Loktionov's account. Such as the use of bases, for example.

ARMY COMMANDER LOKTIONOV: When the alarm is given the air force is transferred from peace-time bases to reserve airfields. It is thus deconcentrated. According to plan the air force occupies what we call its wartime, operational airfields, which already have the necessary supplies of petrol and munitions. A network of such airfields facilitates manoeuvring laterally and in depth.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: Let us now turn to the discussion of further questions. We still have one thing to discuss—the questions submitted by the British and French Missions to the Soviet Mission. These questions amounting to eight, plus one naval question, are, on the one hand, general questions of a political, abstract nature. On the other hand, they touch upon such details and concrete aspects of the relations of future allies that the answers to them would follow from the very fact of the conclusion of a military Convention between our countries.

Having made this reservation, I will reply to these questions in brief point by point.

FIRST QUESTION: What is the opinion of the Soviet Military Mission on the possibility of Italy coming into the war: a) if the Soviet Union signs a Pact with Britain and France, b) if the Soviet Union does not sign a Pact with them.

The opinion of the Soviet Mission is that Italy cannot remain a bystander in the event of an armed aggression in Europe. Italy has a military alliance with Germany, which obliges both countries to act jointly against a third party. Furthermore, the head of present-day Italy, Signor Mussolini, has repeatedly and unequivocally stated that he and his army would be with Germany under any conditions. This appears to be quite enough to form a definite opinion on this score.

The end of this first question is as follows: if the Soviet Mission thinks that Italy will probably enter the war, what is Italy's possible action, operating from Albania?

I regret that the Soviet Military Mission cannot give its opinion on this particular question, because Italy, with her hands untied, can and evidently will operate from different directions—not only from Albania, but directly on the French border, and very likely from Spanish territory as well. I say nothing of Tunisia and the islands in the Mediterranean. For this reason, the Soviet Mission finds it difficult, and, indeed, useless, to form any concrete opinion on this particular question.

SECOND QUESTION: Of the three alternative courses of action outlined by the Soviet Mission, which is the most likely to be adopted by Germany, and what is the opinion of the Soviet Mission on this score?

To foresee the intentions of Germany and her leaders is very difficult, to which the following fact will testify: three days ago Admiral Drax informed us that Germany had mobilized 2,000 000 men and intended to march on August 15.

ADMIRAL DRAX: No, no.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: I see nothing wrong in this [forecast], and was in agreement with you at the time. It could have happened, but it did not. Neither the Admiral, nor the Marshals and Generals in attendance here can, unhappily, foretell events with any degree of accuracy, because the individuals who organize these events know the importance of acting suddenly and unexpectedly. This is why I am in a difficulty in replying to the second question comprehensively.

ADMIRAL DRAX: It is likely that my remark was mistranslated. I want to explain. I said that Germany had 2,000,000 men under arms and is ready for war. But I did not say that she would necessarily march on August 15. All I said was that as from August 15 she would be ready for action at any moment. But I never voiced any view with regard to the precise date when Germany would march.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: I apologize to the Admiral if this is so, but the interpreters put it just as I said here, that Germany had mobilized 2,000,000 men and that there are reports that she would march on the 15th. Here is the record. It says: Germany already has 2,000,000 men under arms, and her action is set for August 15.

ADMIRAL DRAX: No, I did not say that.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: I would ask the Admiral to give us his precise wording. This can be done later. You proceed from the assumption that there has been a misunderstanding. Yet everything I have said, except the reference to the Admiral's words, remains valid. If a big European war is destined to break out, and that is well-nigh inevitable, it will break out, and it will break out suddenly, and its scope and its dimensions are hard to foretell. This is why I can say nothing definite about the second question.

Third Question: Can the Soviet Military Mission give more precise details of the areas of Rumanian territory to which they think it necessary to have a right of access and in which they wish to operate?

This question, too, is hard to answer, because Rumania may be the object of attack at different points of her territory. And if the Soviet Union were to render her any assistance, we should have to take into account the situation as it existed. This situation would define the areas to which we should have to send our troops.

Fourth Question: What does the Soviet Union propose to do if Bulgaria joins Hungary against Rumania? In this case what help can the USSR give to Turkey?

This question is easily answered. France and Britain have Mutual Aid Pacts with Turkey. These Pacts commit Britain and France to defending Turkey. If we were to conclude a military Convention of the three Powers, we should, naturally, take part in this defence of Turkey with our share of armed forces. The strength of the Soviet Union will suffice amply to take part in the joint action of defending Turkey.

Fifth Question: What regular traffic tonnage can be sent by railway to Poland a) from Murmansk, b) from the Black Sea? By what railways can it be directed in order to interfere as little as possible with the supply of the Russian Army.

This is one of those details which I mentioned earlier. If a Convention is concluded between our countries, the Soviet Union will find sufficient tonnage and sufficient possibilities to fulfil all its obligations in regard to its allies.

Sixth Question: This, too, is a question raising a detailed aspect of our future relations. We have a sufficient number of modern

ports on the Black Sea to meet all the defence needs of our country, and of our allies if such there are to be.

If the Admiral and the General have no objection, we could now have our interval. (No objections). I announce an interval of 15 minutes.

(AFTER THE INTERVAL)

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: The session is resumed. I want to reply to the remaining questions.

Seventh Question: This question is one entirely, or almost entirely, for our economic People's Commissariats and primarily for the People's Commissariat for Foreign Trade. I can only say that the Soviet Union will conduct trade operations with friendly or neutral countries not only in time of war, but also now, in peace time. As you know, the Soviet Union has lively commercial relations with many countries in Europe, America and Asia.

Eighth Question: The Soviet Union has a powerful continuously developing oil industry. In step with its development, we have good perfectly adequate sea, river and railway fuel transport facilities, which are also developing continuously. And if the Convention is concluded, this question will naturally be settled in the concrete decisions that are to be adopted as a result of our agreement.

There is still the last, naval question. It reads as follows: What description and number of Franco-British naval forces do you propose should operate in the Baltic?

I give the floor to Fleet Commander II Kuznetsov, People's Commissar for the Navy.

FLEET COMMANDER KUZNETSOV: The number and description of the Anglo-French naval vessels which we think necessary in the Baltic will be defined and specified after the contemplated tasks are set out in detail. (Admiral Drax and General Heywood confer at length). It should be borne in mind, however, that if an insufficient number of ships is sent to the Baltic it will be difficult to solve the principal task of the combined navies, i. e., the destruction of the enemy navy.

It is much harder for us to specify concretely the number and description of vessels than it is for Admiral Drax. In the meantime, the tasks, as we see them, have been outlined. (Another lengthy conference between Admiral Drax and General Doumenc).

ADMIRAL DRAX: I thank the People's Commissar for the Navy for his reply. At the same time, I should like to ask a few more questions at the next meeting.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: Who else would like to speak? The agenda for today is exhausted. We must fix the day of the next meeting and draw up its programme. We have agreed to work through all the questions on the agenda of our conference. The further progress of our meetings depends now entirely on the Soviet Military Mission

receiving replies to the questions it put to the Military Missions of Britain and France.

We have worked hard and if there is no reply today and tomorrow from the British and French Governments we shall, unfortunately, have to interrupt our meetings for some time while we wait for it.

GENERAL DOUMENC: On behalf of the British and French delegations, I should like to thank Marshal Voroshilov for the replies he has offered to our questions. Some of these questions, of course, demand detailed and thorough study. We are prepared to submit additional questions necessary for this concrete study. As concerns our further meetings, we could, perhaps, fix a date for the next meeting at which to deal with these questions. This will not interfere with our waiting for a reply to the cardinal question.

AIR MARSHAL BURNETT: The Marshal may recall that this morning I wanted to ask a few air force questions to clear up some of the points in the plan set out by General Loktionov.

GENERAL HEYWOOD: It is proposed to ask these air questions concurrently with the military questions mentioned by General Doumenc.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: It remains for us to decide when we are going to convene. The Soviet Mission considers that we shall have to end the work of our conference until we get a reply to our questions. (Admiral Drax, General Doumenc and General Heywood confer at length).

ADMIRAL DRAX: There is still plenty of work to be done, which we cannot do without receiving replies to the questions we intend to ask. This work would be held up if the answers are not received. In my opinion a delay of that kind is neither desirable nor necessary, and not in the interests of the three Missions. I propose, therefore, that the next meeting be fixed for the 20th or the 21st, as the Marshal wishes.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: Like Admiral Drax, the Soviet Mission considers it most important to speed the work of our conference. Consequently, it is prepared not only to confer every day, but to give more time to the meetings. However, through no fault of the Soviet Mission, we shall have to terminate our work.

The Soviet Mission has already stated that without a reply to its questions it can recommend its Government nothing concrete on the questions we have here discussed. For this reason, unhappily, I am forced once again to ask Admiral Drax and General Doumenc to agree to an adjournment pending receipt by them of an answer from their Governments. (Admiral Drax and General Doumenc confer at length).

GENERAL DOUMENC: I take the liberty to draw the Marshal's attention to the fact that it is through no fault of ours that we cannot meet his wishes, because you have raised questions which are governmental and require time. Nevertheless, I think it would be worthwhile to set a date, which could subsequently be carried forward if no reply is forthcoming. I suggest fixing a meeting for August 20 at 10 a. m.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: I see no need to set the date of the

next meeting since we are not sure that it can take place. On behalf of my Mission, I declare our consent to convene at once at any moment, as soon as a reply is received from both, or one, of the Governments. Until receipt of this reply I recommend our dear guests to rest, see the sights of Moscow, visit the Exhibition, and make themselves at home. This will be best for our business, and for the outer world. A short interval is a natural thing.

ADMIRAL DRAX: We have agreed that any communication to the press must be co-ordinated by the three Missions. And since we are now contemplating an adjournment for an indefinite period the press will ask us questions on that score. I would, therefore, ask the Marshal whether he has any proposals with regard to the text of a statement for the press which we may have to make.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: It is best to make no statement. Our Missions are Military Missions representing the General Staffs of three Great Powers, and the work of our conference as long as no decisions have been made, does not concern the sensation-hunting pressmen. Adjournment of our Meetings does not mean a breakdown, while the early resumption of work depends solely on the Military Missions of Britain and France and on their Governments. (Admiral Drax and General Doumenc confer at length).

ADMIRAL DRAX: We are in agreement that no statement need be made to the press correspondents in Moscow. But I feel I must draw the Marshal's attention to the fact that when we inform our Governments that our conference has adjourned *sine die*, the world press is likely to view this act as a partial or temporary breakdown, particularly if no statement is to be made to the press. I think therefore that in the present circumstances our Governments would prefer to make a statement of some kind to the press. But that is a question they will decide for themselves. However, if the date of our next meeting were fixed, they would not probably consider it necessary to make a statement to the press. I think the Marshal will take that into account.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: I would like a short interval, after which we shall gather again and decide what to do. (No objections to interval.) I announce a 15-minute interval.

(AFTER THE INTERVAL)

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: The Soviet Military Mission accepts the proposal to set the next meeting for the 20th or the 21st and asks which day is more agreeable to you.

ADMIRAL DRAX: We would rather have August 21. That is, if the reply from London or Paris does not arrive earlier. If it does, we shall ask for an earlier day.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: We agree. Allow me to declare the meeting adjourned.

August 17, 1939

1. What description and number of Franco-British naval forces do you propose should operate in the Baltic? How is it proposed that these ships should enter the Baltic in view of the fact that passage through the Belts and Sound can easily be made impassable by the Germans?

2. How do you propose that these forces should be maintained as regards replenishment with ammunition, torpedoes and naval stores?

3. If, as is probable, the only entrance into the Baltic is by the White Sea Canal, what is the maximum size warship we can pass through?

4. If the German naval forces entirely abandon the Baltic in order to make a concentrated naval attack against Allied shipping in the Atlantic, how long would it take to move the total Franco-British force from the Baltic to Home Waters through the Canal in order to deal with that attack?

It should be noted that the distances via the White Sea to our North Sea naval bases are as follows: Rosyth 2,630; Chatham 3,000. These are greater than the distance from England to America across the Atlantic Ocean.

5. What naval base facilities could the USSR offer us in the Baltic and on the Murmansk Coast?

How rapidly can Franco-British surface ships operating in those waters be docked or efficiently repaired at Kronstadt or Leningrad after incurring severe damage in action? Would this work be slower in winter?

6. Does the USSR maintain ice-breakers to keep open Kronstadt during the winter?

7. To what extent can Soviet forces assist Allied naval forces in protecting convoys in the Eastern Mediterranean. How many ships can the USSR send out of the Black Sea to participate with the Allies against the Italian submarines, against the Dodecanese Islands, and in preserving Soviet communications through the Mediterranean?

8. If Britain agreed to move naval forces to the Baltic or Black Sea to deal with enemy concentrations that may temporarily occur in these areas, would the USSR agree to move equal forces to the North Sea and Mediterranean when enemy concentrations are operating there?

9. Does the USSR agree that when a merchant ship is intercepted by a submarine, the policy of visit and search shall be carried out and the crew put in a place of safety before the ship is sunk?

MILITARY QUESTIONS

August 17, 1939

First Question

It is about 20 days' march from your border to East Prussia. The number of possible routes between the Dvina and the Niemen is six.

To form a front with solid initial positions against the fortified line of East Prussia it is necessary to occupy about 200 kilometres, which will require 20 divisions. To mount an attack infantry, artillery and tank reserves are also needed.

It will evidently take a month to do all this, considering the preliminary mobilization operations.

It seems likely that during this month the aggressor may, as soon as he establishes land communications with East Prussia, mount an operation of his own in the direction of Riga and seek a battle with the Russian Army on the Riga-Grodno Front.

Does the Russian delegation think that the Red Army will be capable of accepting this battle with forces that are at least equal to those which the enemy will concentrate there?

Does it feel that a battle is possible on this front, chiefly with regard to munitions?

Second Question

The Soviet delegation has been asked to indicate the parts of Rumanian territory into which the Red Army would like to send troops as soon as the situation demands.

The reply we received indicates that account must be taken of the concrete circumstances and that the situation would determine the zones of action.

We ask for the following explanation:

What actions does the Soviet delegation envisage in the event of an aggression by Hungary against Rumania?

Does it envisage the possibility of a battle south of the Carpathians?

Third Question

Variant No. 3 is evidently the one which is of the greatest interest to the Soviet Union, because in that variant it deploys the greatest forces.

The position of the Soviet delegation makes even the preparation of a Pact conditional upon a political question which involves third Powers, and this retards the conclusion of the Pact.

As long as there is no pact, the situation in which we should find ourselves would be as follows:

The Franco-British armies would evidently be in a state of war with the German armies, because Germany would in the first place have committed an aggression against Poland in order to reach Latvia. Yet we would have no concerted operations in the Baltic or for the maintenance of your sea communications both in the Arctic Ocean and in the Mediterranean.

The Franco-British delegation suggests that these questions could be examined and negotiated independently of the state of the cardinal question, and that thereby we could avoid loss of time.

**No. 430. Telegram from the Ambassador of France in the USSR
to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of France**

August 17, 1939

For your personal information and for the information of the President of the Council of Ministers only.

The General * has submitted to his Department a report on the meetings on the 16th and 17th.

The next meeting has been scheduled for the 21st so as to give us enough time to receive instructions on the Polish question before that date.

I wish to confirm that in the absence of a favourable decision (official, semi-official or even tacit), which would enable us to give an affirmative reply here, the military negotiations will be suspended.

Since the Admiral ** has received instructions to concert his actions with the position of the French Mission, a *démarche vis-à-vis* the English would seem to be superfluous.

(A copy was sent to Warsaw.)

From the archives of the Ministry for
Foreign Affairs of Germany.

**No. 431. Telegram from the Head of the French Military Mission
to the War Ministry of France**

Moscow, August 17, 1939

The scheduled meeting took place this morning; it was devoted mainly to a survey of the strength and plans of the Soviet Air Force.

The following is a report on all the meetings:

1) The impression was formed from the outset that the Soviet Delegation has strict instructions on the question of passage through Polish and Rumanian territory. *** At the earliest opportunity they raised this question as the basis for any military agreement and declared that they would advise their Government against concluding any Convention unless this point was accepted.

2) We were able to keep the discussion going at all seven meetings by agreeing that brief reports should be made on the size of our res-

* J. Doumenc.

** P. Drax.

*** See Document No. 415.

pective military resources. In this respect the statements of the Soviet Delegation were precise and contained numerous figures.

Plans for military assistance to us in various possible cases were outlined. This assistance is considerable since, depending on the specific case, it would amount to between 70 and 100 per cent of the forces we would put up.

3) The motive for their *sine qua non* is the fear lest Poland and the Rumanians should be too late in approaching them for assistance. Another motive is their avowed desire to undertake offensive action in our favour in the event that the main blow should be directed against us. Finally, this would enable them to avoid losing time if German aggression should be directed against the Baltic States.

In short, we note a clearly expressed intention not to stand aside but, on the contrary, to act in earnest.

4) There is no doubt that the USSR wants to conclude a Military Pact and that it does not want us to come up with any document devoid of concrete meaning; Marshal Voroshilov declared that all those questions of assistance, rear areas, communications and the like could be settled without difficulty as soon as the question which they call the "cardinal question" was resolved.

5) The atmosphere has all along been very cordial and the Soviet hospitality excellent.

Our relationships with the English Delegation are in the nature of very close contact.

6) The meeting of the 21st was scheduled only so as not to create any outward appearance of an interruption in the negotiations. For the negotiations to continue it is now necessary for me to be able to say "yes" in reply to the question that has been posed.

See our Ambassador's telegram of today.

For General Gamelin
General Doumenc

From the archives of the Ministry
for Foreign Affairs of Germany.

No. 432. Telegram from the Ambassador of France in the USSR to the Ambassador of France in Poland

August 17, 1939

For your personal information and for the information of General Musse.

Captain Beaufré will arrive in Warsaw on the 17th by train, leaving Moscow at 23 hours on the 16th. He has been instructed by General Doumenc, in concert with myself, to give you and General Musse an

account of the present state of our negotiations in so far as Poland is concerned.

The very least that we should secure from the Poles is that they should not take an attitude which would provoke the breakdown of our negotiations with the Russians.

We would be content if the Polish Staff, unless it should wish to assume greater obligations (and for the moment we are not asking it to) would agree, at least tacitly, to accord General Doumenc complete confidence in elaborating together with the Russians a programme of co-operation, geographically very limited, which will be outlined to you.

If the Poles refuse to accept this minimal proposal they will frustrate our agreement with the Russians and this would have immediate consequences whose full gravity both for them and for us as their guarantors they can well imagine.

From the archives of the Ministry
for Foreign Affairs of Germany.

No. 433. Telegram from the Military Attaché of France in Poland to the War Ministry of France

August 19, 1939

For three hours today the British Military Attaché and I talked with General Stachiewicz * and searched in vain for a compromise formula.

The dogma handed down by Pilsudski ** and based on considerations of a historical and geographical nature proscribes even consideration of the question of foreign troops entering Polish territory. Only during hostilities can this rule be slackened.

The Chief of Staff has emphasized that the Polish doctrine on this question is well known and has always been immutable.

Finally, upon agreeing it with Beck, we acknowledged that our delegation in Moscow could manoeuvre as if no question had ever been put to the Poles.

Captain Beaufré, who is returning *** to Moscow on Sunday, has been informed.

From the archives of the Ministry
for Foreign Affairs of Germany.

* Chief of the General Staff of the Polish Armed Forces.

** Marshal, Prime Minister of Poland, 1926-1928 and in 1930.

*** Part of the coded text has been distorted; the most likely word has been inserted. (*Note in the original*).

No. 434. Telegram from the Ambassador of France in the USSR
to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of France

August 20, 1939

If the French Government does not consider it possible to speak in Warsaw as a guarantor with sufficient authority to compel the Poles to alter their position I see no solution other than not to accept literally the objections of M. Beck, whose one desire may be to have an opportunity to ignore the entire business.

Under these conditions, the Russians could be given an affirmative reply in principle, which would make it possible for the military negotiations to continue, with the stipulation that the contemplated limited right of passage [of troops] would be granted only in the event of the outbreak of hostilities between Poland and Germany.

From the archives of the Ministry for
Foreign Affairs of Germany.

No. 435. Minute of the War Ministry of France. Military
Negotiations with Moscow

Not earlier than August 20, 1939

The French Military Mission headed by General Doumenc, having established contact in London with the British Mission headed by Admiral Plunkett*, set out together by sea for Leningrad and arrived in Moscow on August 12.

"After a wonderful reception accorded by the Soviet side," the negotiations which passed "invariably in a very cordial atmosphere" began on the 13th (General Doumenc's telegram).

But the *sine qua non* condition for the conclusion of a Treaty advanced by the Soviet Delegation as early as the 14th** is that in the event of aggression against Poland or Rumania the Armed Forces of the USSR should be able to enter:

the Wilno Gap,
Galicia,
and Rumanian territory.

* Admiral Plunkett Drax.

** See Document No. 415.

The Soviets explain that they are advancing this condition owing to: a fear lest they be asked to assist the Poles or Rumanians when it will already be too late;

a desire to undertake offensive operations in the interests of France in the event of the main German blow being originally directed against the Western front;

the need to avoid any loss of time in the event of German aggression against the Baltic States.

In short, it is General Doumenc's impression that they are displaying firm determination not to stand aside, but, on the contrary, to assume the full extent of obligations.

On the other hand, to lessen the foreseeable fears of the Poles, the Soviet delegates are very stringently limiting the zones of entry [by Soviet forces] and in defining them proceed exclusively from considerations of a strategical nature.

Thus, the Moscow negotiations can evidently go on only if agreement is reached on the condition for direct co-operation which has been advanced by the Soviets and which can be accepted only with Polish consent.

However, despite the efforts of the French Ambassador in Warsaw and of our Military Attaché, the Poles have stubbornly refused to agree in principle to the entry of Soviet forces into their territory. M. Beck and the Army Chief of Staff, General Stachiewicz, have displayed irreconcilable hostility in this respect, only agreeing that in order to prevent a breakdown of the Moscow negotiations our Military Mission could manoeuvre as if not a single question had been put to the Poles.*

Should this concession be regarded as the only one that can be got from the Poles or should it be interpreted as an unspoken request for pressure to be brought to bear upon them?

Soviet support in the formation of an Eastern front remains essential and the breakdown of the Moscow negotiations could merely prod Hitler into speeding up the course of events.

From the archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Germany.

No. 436. TASS Communiqué

August 20, 1939

The Polish newspapers *Polska Zbrojna*, *Express Poranny* and *Kurjer Warszawski* recently carried a report about the differences of opi-

* See Document No. 433.

nion that have arisen in the course of the negotiations in Moscow between the Soviet Military Delegation, on the one hand, and the French and English Military Missions, on the other, in connection with the alleged demand on the part of the USSR for military assistance from England and France in the event of war in the Far East. TASS is authorized to state that this report is pure invention from beginning to end and that the differences of opinion, which in fact exist, concern a completely different subject and have no relation whatsoever to the question of the Far East.

From *Izvestia*, No. 192 (6962),
August 20, 1939.

No. 437. Record of the Meeting of the Military Missions of the USSR, Britain and France

August 21, 1939

Opened at 11.03 a.m.

Adjourned at 5.25 p.m.

ADMIRAL DRAX (presiding): I declare the meeting open.

To begin with, I must tell the Marshal that in accordance with his wishes we have gathered today. In my opinion, however, we should have postponed the meeting for another 3 to 4 days. But we wanted to take advantage of today's meeting to discuss three or four important questions.

I must inform you that the powers of the British Mission have arrived and will now be read.

(Reads the text of the powers in English. The Russian translation will be attached on receipt of the written text.)

I pass to the second point. Since the Marshal wished for the meeting to take place, I would like to ask for his view about our further work.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: On behalf of the Soviet Mission I propose that we should adjourn not for 3 or 4 days, as requested by the English and French Missions, but for a longer term, all the more so since members of our Mission are engaged at this time with the autumn manoeuvres and in the hope that in the interim the question which interests all of us will be clarified. I have in mind the receipt of replies from the Governments of Great Britain and France to the questions of the Soviet Mission. (Admiral Drax and General Doumenc confer.)

ADMIRAL DRAX: I ask the Marshal to specify the length of the adjournment more definitely.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: I regret to say that I cannot specify the date, because, evidently, there is no practical need for us to meet until the British and French Missions get the reply from their Govern-

ments. I think that if favourable replies are to be received to our questions, our conference will have to convene as early as possible. If, however, the answers are unfavourable, I see no possibility of any further work, because the questions raised by us are, as I have previously informed this conference, of decisive, cardinal importance to us. If we do not get favourable replies to them there will scarcely be any need for us to meet again.

ADMIRAL DRAX: We appreciate the fact that the members of the Soviet Mission are very busy. We should be glad to provide a precise reply to the Marshal's questions, but I would ask for an interval to discuss the Marshal's proposal concerning the term of adjournment. (The Soviet Mission agrees to have an interval.)

An interval is announced.

(AFTER THE INTERVAL)

ADMIRAL DRAX: The General and I agree with reluctance to the Marshal's proposals as regards adjournment.

Before we part today, I wish to note on behalf of the British and French Missions that we were invited here to negotiate a Convention for military action. We therefore find it difficult to understand the action of the Soviet Mission, whose intention it apparently was to start out by raising difficult and important political questions. The Soviet leaders must have been well aware that the answers to these questions would require reference to our Governments and by them to other Governments. This is precisely the source of the delays which are undesirable from every point of view. The French and British Missions are therefore unable to accept any responsibility for the delays that have arisen.

As we may get answers from our Governments at any moment, we would like to ask that the members of the Soviet Military Mission find the time to take part in further meetings.

In conclusion, we express the following opinion. We are ready to go on with our conference and feel that the time thus spent will not be wasted.

This is all we wished to say.

I repeat, we are ready to go on at any time you wish. (Admiral Drax read his statement from a typed text with pencilled notes and corrections.)

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: I ask the Chairman for an interval so that we may consider our reply.

ADMIRAL DRAX: Before breaking up, there is another question which I would like to ask the Marshal.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: Please do.

ADMIRAL DRAX: We feel that no statement should be made to the press indicating that the conference is adjourned *sine die*. We think that this would lead to unfortunate results, since it is our opinion that we shall resume the conference before very long.

(This hand-written statement was handed to Admiral Drax by General Doumenc. General Heywood translated it, and Admiral Drax read it out.)

The conference is adjourned until 4 p.m.

(AFTER THE ADJOURNMENT)

ADMIRAL DRAX: The session is resumed.

ARMY COMMANDER SHAPOSHNIKOV: The People's Commissar for the Navy, a member of our Mission, is very busy at the moment and cannot be present at this meeting.

ADMIRAL DRAX: We take note of this and regret his absence.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: In reply to the statement by the Anglo-French Missions I shall now read our own.

"In his statement the head of the British Military Mission, Admiral Drax, in the name of the British and French Missions raised several questions which the Soviet Military Mission considers it necessary to elucidate.

"1. The statement stresses the fact that the British and French Missions were invited to the Soviet Union to work out a military Convention. The Soviet Military Mission will explain the actual state of affairs. The present conference of the Missions of Britain, France and the USSR was a natural consequence of the political conversations conducted by representatives of Britain, France and the USSR, the aim of which was to produce a joint plan to resist aggression in Europe. In connection with this, the Soviet Government has repeatedly stated that it cannot separate a political Pact and military Convention which must be the result of political and military talks between our countries. Having agreed with this view of the Soviet Government, the Governments of Britain and France sent their Military Missions to the USSR.

"2. The Anglo-French Military Mission, according to its statement, finds it difficult to understand the action of the Soviet Military Mission, whose intentions, in its opinion, consisted of at once putting forward difficult and important political questions.

"The intention of the Soviet Military Mission was, and still is, to agree with the British and French Military Missions on the practical organization of military co-operation of the armed forces of the three contracting countries. The Soviet Military Mission considers that the USSR, not having a common frontier with Germany, can give help to France, Britain, Poland and Rumania only on the condition that its troops are given right of passage across Polish and Rumanian territory, as there exist no other ways of making contact with the troops of the aggressor. In the same way British and American troops, in the last World War, could not have taken part in the general action with the French military forces, had they not had the opportunity of operating from French soil. Similarly, the Soviet Armed Forces cannot co-operate with the armed forces of Britain and France if they are not

allowed on Polish and Rumanian territory. That is a military axiom. Such is the firm belief of the Soviet Military Mission.

"The British and French Missions, to our surprise, do not agree with the Soviet Mission about this. In this is our difference. The Soviet Military Mission cannot picture to itself how the Governments and General Staffs of Britain and France, in sending their Missions to the USSR for discussions on a military Convention, could have failed to give them precise and positive instructions on such an elementary question as the passage and action of the Soviet Armed Forces against the troops of the aggressor on the territory of Poland and Rumania, with whom Britain and France have appropriate military and political relations.

"If, however, this axiomatic question is turned by the British and French into a great problem demanding long study, this means that there is every reason to doubt their desire for effective and serious military co-operation with the USSR. In view of the above the responsibility for the delay in the military negotiations and for the interruption in these conversations naturally falls on the British and French sides."

(Prolonged conference between Admiral Drax and General Doumenc).

ADMIRAL DRAX: We wish to have a short interval.

An interval is announced.

(AFTER THE INTERVAL)

ADMIRAL DRAX: In reply to the Marshal's statement I wish to say that if there were any doubt of our desire to come to a serious military agreement, we should have told you so frankly and immediately.

It seems to me that there is a misunderstanding in the minds of the Soviet Military Mission concerning our view of the Soviet plans. We are far from disagreeing with the three alternatives put forward by the Chief of the General Staff, Shaposhnikov. The political questions involved are being dealt with by our Governments.

But events are moving fast and in order to save valuable time we wish to hand you a few important questions, drawn up within the framework of the three alternatives. We ask you to study them, so that you may be in a position to give us your views on them at our next meeting. We are ready to discuss these questions at any time which suits you.

As regards my question of this morning, I want to ask you if you are ready to meet when we receive our reply from London and Paris.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: In view of the uncertainty of the situation regarding the receipt of the replies, it seems to me best not to decide now the question about the date of our meeting. It stands to reason that if the British and French Missions receive affirmative answers to the questions which we have put, the Soviet Military Mission is ready to meet and go into those questions which we have so far only outlined and which still require detailed examination.

ADMIRAL DRAX: We are submitting to you in writing a number of questions and ask you to study them. We are also submitting some naval questions.*

I also ask the Marshal whether he has any suggestions about a statement to the press. I ask this because one official statement has already been made which was not agreed upon beforehand with the other Missions.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: I consider that there is no occasion at the moment to undertake any mutual obligations with regard to a statement to the press. The Soviet Military Mission is not proposing to give any statements to the press about the proceedings at our conference. But it cannot guarantee that some information may not leak out to the press. As regards the Admiral's question about the statement which appeared in the press on our deliberations, the position is as follows:

The world press, including the British and French press, have frequently and in a very detailed manner suggested that difficulties in our negotiations have been caused by the raising by the Soviet Military Mission, or the Soviet Government, of the question of an Anglo-French guarantee of our frontiers in the Far East. I do not think that it is necessary here to talk about the spurious nature of this press campaign. This is the sole explanation of the official TASS statement that the question of the Far Eastern frontier, and military co-operation of the USSR and Britain and France in the Far East, had not been raised in our conferences and that there are differences on other issues.**

I do not see in this any violation of the agreement we arrived at not to give statements to the press about our proceedings. Nothing was said about our proceedings. (Admiral Drax confers with General Doumenc.)

ADMIRAL DRAX: We take note of the Marshal's statement concerning the TASS communication and thank him for his detailed reply.

May we conclude therefrom that our agreement to give no statements to the press without preliminary consultation of all sides still holds good?

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: I assume that our conference is adjourning for a more or less lengthy period. For this reason there is no need to tie ourselves down. However, I repeat—our Military Mission does not intend to give any information to the press.

ADMIRAL DRAX: We take note of this and state that for our part, the British and French Missions also have no intentions of making any statements to the press.

ARMY COMMANDER SHAPOSHNIKOV: We have received a number of questions from the British and French Military Missions. The Soviet Military Mission, for its part, has asked few additional questions.

* (Sic) Obviously the questions are meant which were handed on August 17.

** See Document No. 436.

It reserves the right when work is resumed to ask the questions that it sees fit.

ADMIRAL DRAX: This is understood.

And now, since we have exhausted the programme of our meeting, I beg to be allowed to submit another five questions concerning the air forces.

I agree with the Marshal's suggestion that our meetings be adjourned, but I still have one thing to add: I shall be surprised if the reply to the political question is delayed.

I declare the meeting closed.

QUESTIONS BY THE FRENCH AND BRITISH MILITARY MISSIONS CONCERNING THE AIR FORCES

August 21, 1939

1. At what speed can the Soviet Air Force be mobilized on their Polish and Rumanian fronts?

2. Does the USSR propose to work from its own air bases or from forward bases in Poland and Rumania?

3. Could the USSR supply Rumania and Poland with aircraft or materials for aircraft construction?

4. In the event of war does the USSR propose to help Turkey with aircraft and equipment?

5. Are the airdromes and landing strips, which would be occupied by the Soviet Air Force on the Western frontier of the USSR in the event of war, suitable for the operation of aircraft at all times of the year, including autumn, winter and spring? Is operation only possible on a limited scale at all or some of these airdromes at certain periods of the year?

From the archives. Published in
International Affairs, 1959,
No 3, pp. 155-158.

No. 438. Telegram from the British Chargé d'Affaires in France to the British Foreign Secretary

August 22, 1939

[1.] French Government are instructing French Ambassador at Warsaw to make a final attempt either through M. Beck or Marshal Smigly-Rydz to persuade Poland to give General Doumenc *carte blanche* to give a pledge if only tacit on her behalf to admit Russian troops in the

event only of Russia supporting Poland against German aggression. He is to urge that if as Poland may anticipate Russian reaction is unfavourable, responsibility for breakdown of Moscow negotiations which Poland will otherwise share will lie squarely with Russia; while if it is favourable it may be possible to limit scope of German-Russian agreement and make it compatible with Russian engagements to France and Great Britain.

2. French Ambassador is to recall that France has given Poland her guarantee * and helped her financially and with material. France therefore feels entitled to ask of Poland this sacrifice in which lies the last hope of preserving peace. He is to press the request with the greatest energy and to insist that Poland weigh the full consequences of refusal.

3. M. Bonnet asks that His Majesty's Government will urgently instruct British Ambassador at Warsaw to support strongly his French colleague. M. Daladier especially hopes that His Majesty's Government will send instructions at once.

From Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939, Third Series, Vol. VII, London, 1954, p. 117.

No. 439. Extract from a Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in Britain to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the USSR

August 22, 1939

Today I have had occasion to talk to a large number of people, including Lloyd George, the Duchess of Atholl, Greenwood, Churchill, D'Egville (an English Parliamentary Whip) and others. My general impression is that the shock received by the English will do them good, although it may take some time before they digest its significance.¹⁴⁵ Lloyd George is well disposed: he in fact thinks that the Soviet Government has displayed too much patience in the negotiations with England and France.

Ambassador

From the archives.

* See Document No. 229.

No. 440. Memorandum of a Conversation Between the Head of the Soviet Military Mission and the Head of the French Military Mission

August 22, 1939

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: I beg General Doumenc to show me the document he has received from his Government, and of which I have been informed by letter. I should also like to know if the English Mission has received a reply to the same question.

GENERAL DOUMENC: I have no document, but my Government has informed me that the reply to the basic, essential question is in the affirmative. In other words, the Government has empowered me to sign a military convention under which authorisation will be given for the passage of Soviet troops at the points specified by you, that is to say, the Corridor of Vilno, and, if the actual circumstances demand it, Galicia and Roumania.¹⁴⁶

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: Is that the French Government's message?

GENERAL DOUMENC: Yes, the French Government has given me these instructions.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: And the British Government?

GENERAL DOUMENC: I do not know if Admiral Drax has received a similar reply from the British Government, but I know that the Admiral is of opinion that the conference can go on.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: Then the English Delegation knows of this communication?

GENERAL DOUMENC: Yes, I told the Admiral that the French Government's reply had arrived. And I am nearly certain that the same reply will be given by the English Government. But, as I am responsible for the military questions and Admiral Drax more particularly for the naval ones, this reply is sufficient to allow the work of our conference to proceed.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: It may be that the English Delegation agrees that General Doumenc should take charge of the military questions. But it seems to me that the English Mission has, if not a dominant role, at least an equal one, in all our conversations. Hence it will clearly be difficult for us to continue the work of the conference without a reply from the English Government to our question.

GENERAL DOUMENC: I think that the reply of the British Government will be here soon.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: There is another question in which I am interested. I apologise, General, but it is a very serious question and I find it essential to ask it.

GENERAL DOUMENC: I also desire to speak seriously and frankly with the Marshal.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: You have given no reply regarding the attitude of the Polish and Roumanian Governments in this matter. Are

they being kept informed of the negotiations, or does the reply you have received come solely from the French Government, without previous communication to Poland and Roumania?

GENERAL DOUMENC: I do not know what conversations have taken place between the Governments. I can only repeat what my Government has told me. Taking the opportunity afforded by the present conversation, I would like to ask the following question: do you intend our conversations to proceed rapidly and to lead to the signing of a military convention? I came here for that purpose, but time is passing.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: Undoubtedly, time is passing; but it is not our fault if the English and French representatives have taken up so much time over these questions.

GENERAL DOUMENC: I agree with you. It is possible that in the beginning we had difficulties; they were natural and were beyond our control. But I can assure the Marshal once again that I am ready to work as quickly and as efficiently as possible.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: I do not doubt that. During these days I have learnt to know you; I appreciate your sincerity and your desire to sign a military convention as soon as possible.

GENERAL DOUMENC: Rapidly and with mutual trust, as must be the case between soldiers who have a common enemy.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: Yet eleven days have passed by, and all our activity has consisted in marking time. Therefore, I cannot agree to take part in further discussions until all the official replies have arrived. I do not doubt that the General has received an affirmative answer from his Government, but the position of Poland, Roumania and Great Britain is still unknown. Hence our further work can only lead to useless talk, which will do more harm than good from a political point of view. I am convinced that the Poles themselves would wish to take part in our discussions had they given their consent to the passage of Soviet troops. They would have insisted upon being included; their General Staff would not have desired to be left out of the examination of questions which concern them so nearly. As this is not the case, I do not think that they can be conversant with the matter.

GENERAL DOUMENC: That is possible, but I do not know and cannot say.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: Let us wait until everything has been cleared up.

GENERAL DOUMENC: I will wait with pleasure, but I do not wish to wait in vain. I will be frank with the Marshal. It has already been announced that "someone" is to arrive shortly; such visits do not please me.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: That is true, but the responsibility rests with the French and English. The question of military co-operation with France has been discussed for several years, but has never been solved. Last year, when Czecho-Slovakia went under, we waited

for a sign from France. Our troops were ready, but the sign was not given.

GENERAL DOUMENC: Our troops were equally ready.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: Then what can have happened? Over here not only were our troops ready, but the Government, the country, everyone, wished to aid Czecho-Slovakia and to fulfil the obligations laid down in the Treaties.

GENERAL DOUMENC: If the Marshal had been in France at that time he would have seen that everything was ready for a struggle. After the recent European events, and if a Peace Front is to be created, it must be done now. I therefore repeat that I am at your disposal, and that I am ready to work when you wish, as you wish, and in the most practical way possible.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: If the English and French Missions had arrived with all their proposals in a concrete and clear form I am convinced that in five or six days we could have finished our work and signed the Military Convention.

GENERAL DOUMENC: I think that we shall now need three or four days to sign the Military Convention. The situation is sufficiently clear. The statement made by General Shaposhnikov is an excellent basis on which to build the Convention. For my part I am ready to subscribe to the fundamental proposals made by General Shaposhnikov.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: Apart from our proposals, there must also be Anglo-French suggestions. We still have to agree on very many practical points.

GENERAL DOUMENC: Quite. General Shaposhnikov said that he intended to put a series of questions. I will answer them with pleasure.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: Please allow us to wait until the situation is clear, that is to say, until we have the British Government's reply and until the position of Poland and Roumania seems clear to us. Then we will meet again. If these things do not happen, then it will be useless for us to meet again, because in such a case no result will be possible. It is essential that the reply should indicate definitely that Poland is being kept informed. It is equally necessary that the British and French Governments' reply should be made in accord with the Polish and Roumanian Governments. We do not want Poland to boast that she has refused our aid—which we have no intention of forcing her to accept.

GENERAL DOUMENC: I will not lose sight of the Marshal's questions; as soon as I have received the replies, I will advise him. But at present I think that we, as soldiers working together, could examine in sufficient detail the different forms that military operations might take. In this way we shall, in spite of everything, gain time.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: If the principal question is settled, all the others—excluding some intervening political event—can be dis-

posed of without difficulty. Then we shall quickly be able to agree. But I fear one thing: the French and English sides have allowed the political and military discussions to drag on too long. That is why we must not exclude the possibility, during this time, of certain political events. Let us wait. The sooner we have the reply, the quicker we shall be able to decide definitely how to act in the future.

GENERAL DOUMENC: Under the present circumstances, time is precious. That is why I am ready to examine the draft Convention proposed by the Marshal, and to show the Marshal my proposal. Then it will be possible to discuss in a sufficiently concrete form the wishes of the different parties.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: We have put forward elementary conditions. What we submit for discussion gives us nothing but heavy responsibilities—to gather our troops and to fight the common enemy. Surely we cannot be obliged to beg for the right to fight the common enemy? As long as these questions are not settled, no discussions can take place.

GENERAL DOUMENC: If my Government have given me an affirmative reply, they have not done so lightly. If I now declare that my Government have said "Yes", I consider that we can begin our work. Now the Marshal asks me about new political guarantees. I am ready to ask for them, but I fear that this will give the impression that we do not wish to sign the Convention quickly.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: I believe you misunderstand me. I have not spoken of new guarantees. I said only this: if nothing happens from a political point of view between now and then, we can agree quickly. As soon as the situation is clear and the answer to our question has been given by the French and English Governments, in concert with the Polish and Roumanian Governments, we shall be able to agree rapidly and to settle all the practical problems. But all this, I repeat, is based on the assumption that no political occurrence intervenes.

GENERAL DOUMENC: I understand the Marshal to refer to a declaration or to some information from the Polish Government?

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: No, not that. I ask whether there is a reply approved by the Polish and Roumanian Governments, or merely a reply from the French Government on the following lines: "We have put the question to Poland and we hope to receive a reply in the affirmative, etc." That is no reply for us. It is a useless waste of time. I believe implicitly in the General and the General believes in his Government, but on this point we must be absolutely clear. We must have a definite reply from the Governments of these countries, showing that they agree to the passage of our troops.

GENERAL DOUMENC: I do not think that it is our wish to deceive you.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: Naturally not. But we know the Poles well. The Poles, naturally, will also like to clear up some questions

if there is no previous agreement with them; but neither you nor I know whether they have been informed of the general state of affairs.

GENERAL DOUMENC: I know them perhaps a little less well than the Marshal, but in spite of that I wish to ask whether you think it possible to begin our conference, or would you prefer to postpone it?

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: We have at present no subject for conversation. Until we receive a reply, all conversation is useless.

GENERAL DOUMENC: My opinion is different. No work, generally speaking, is useless. We have confidence in you and we think that this work is justified and useful. For example, the question of the Corridor of Vilno ought to be studied closely to find out all its advantages and drawbacks. That is useful, even if it becomes necessary afterwards to work jointly with the Poles as the Marshal suggested just now.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: I have already said that if the Poles had given an affirmative reply, they would have insisted on being present at our talks. As they have not done this, it means that they know nothing of the matter or that they do not agree.

GENERAL DOUMENC: I see that the Marshal has no intention of continuing our work in the next few days, and I can only take note of the fact. In spite of that, I am still convinced that we have good reason to continue our work.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: Our Delegation has already given its reply. Until we receive a clear answer to the questions put, we will not work.

GENERAL DOUMENC. Practical questions are not always easily and rapidly disposed of. Practical questions also need to be studied closely, and I propose that we should continue this work. It will be useful to do so before the conclusion of the Convention, without, however, binding either of the parties.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: We cannot lose time over useless work. When complete clarity has been established and all the replies have been received, then we will work.

GENERAL DOUMENC: We have conversed together quite freely, although about subjects which need great precision. I should be very glad if the Marshal would send me a record of our conversation—only for myself.

MARSHAL VOROSHILOV: Certainly. As soon as everything is settled on your side, let me know by General Palasse or write to me direct.

No. 441. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in Britain to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the USSR

August 23, 1939

Yesterday's statement by the English Government about its loyalty to obligations in respect of Poland and the hastily conducted measures to prepare the country for wartime conditions (the evacuation of schools, street and house blackouts, the ban on exports of war materials and the like) have created in the country an atmosphere of great tension and anticipation of decisive events in the very near future. Government circles have not yet lost hope for a new Munich, and in this connection a certain amount of pressure is being brought to bear on Poland.¹⁴⁷ However, the advancing by Germany of pressing demands concerning not only Danzig but also the Corridor and Silesia is making the Munichmen's task much more difficult. The general mood, as far as it can be gauged from the press, the cinema, and meetings and conversations (today I again talked to a large number of people, including Benes, the Greek and Danish Ministers, several Conservative and Liberal Members of Parliament and so on), is such that if Poland should make up her mind to fight, England will be compelled to support her, although it is not yet clear in what form and on what scale.

Ambassador

From the archives.

No. 442. Telegram from the Soviet Chargé d'Affaires in Japan * to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the USSR

August 24, 1939

News of the conclusion of a Non-Aggression Pact between the USSR and Germany has made a strong impression here, causing obvious confusion particularly among the military and the fascist camp.¹⁴⁸ Yesterday and today there have been continuous exchanges of visits and the Pact has been the subject of lively discussion among members of the Government, the Court and the Privy Council. Worth noting is the vigorous activity of Konoye **, Matsudaira *** and

* N. I. Generalov.

** Japanese Prime Minister, June 1937-January 1939.

*** Minister of Japanese Imperial Household.

Kido*. The newspapers are beginning to discuss, so far cautiously, the possibility of a similar pact between Japan and the USSR. In anticipation of this, yesterday and today dispatches from correspondents in Berlin have appeared under banner headlines saying: "It looks as if Germany, after the signing of the Pact, will try to get Japan to conclude a similar pact with the USSR"; "Before leaving for Moscow Ribbentrop spoke in favour of this to Japanese Ambassador Oshima." Many prominent figures are publicly admitting the inevitability of a radical reappraisal of Japanese foreign policy, notably *vis-à-vis* the USSR.

Chargé d'Affaires

From the archives.

**No. 443. Excerpt from the Diary of the Soviet Chargé d'Affaires
In Germany ****

August 24, 1939

The First Secretary of the US Embassy, Mr. Heath, has called on me. He is extremely worried over the future of Poland. He is particularly interested in the policy of the Soviet Union in the event of Germany being at war with England and France.

In conclusion, he has expressed the hope that everything will end peacefully, in a second Munich, and that US President Roosevelt already plans to take certain steps.

From the archives.

**No. 444. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in Britain to the
People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the USSR**

August 26, 1939

Though military preparations are continuing at an accelerated pace and even in a deliberately conspicuous manner (in order to produce the appropriate psychological effect on the people), Munich-like sentiments can be unmistakably felt in the air since yesterday.

* Japanese Minister of Welfare, 1938-39; Minister for Home Affairs, 1939.

** N. V. Ivanov.

The British Government, Roosevelt, the Pope, the Belgian King and others are trying feverishly to find some grounds for a "compromise" on the Polish question. The British Ambassador in Berlin, Henderson, arrived in London today by plane and gave the Cabinet some kind of communication from Hitler¹⁴⁹ the contents of which are kept secret so far. A meeting of the British Government has just ended; it discussed the communication but so far the Cabinet has taken no decision on it. Another government meeting is scheduled for tomorrow morning.

Ambassador

From the archives.

No. 445. Memorandum of a Conversation Between the Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR and the Chinese Ambassador in the USSR

August 26, 1939

Yang Tse said he had received a telegraphic reply from his Government. The Chinese Government welcomes the appointment of Panyushkin as Plenipotentiary Ambassador of the USSR in China.

I told Yang Tse that we wanted to speed up the reception of Comrade Panyushkin by the Chairman of the National Government and the presentation of his credentials, as this was important from the standpoint of the present international situation. A statement by our Ambassador in China to the effect that the Soviet Union supports the friendly Chinese people in their struggle for independence would have a positive impact on the Chinese people's struggle against Japanese aggression.

Yang Tse replied that he too considered it necessary to speed up the exchange of speeches. He would report this to his Government and was confident that it would agree with him on this matter. I said for my part that I would inform Panyushkin of this.

Yang Tse asked to be given such information as was available about the present international situation. He had received a communication from his Government to the effect that the signing of the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact had pleased the Chinese Government very much for this treaty would strengthen the Soviet Union and would undoubtedly be a blow to Japan.¹⁴⁸ The Chinese Government had instructed him to clear up certain questions with us in connection with the Pact.

The Ambassador began with the question as to what effect this political event would have on the international situation.

I replied that in formulating its policy the Soviet Government had always been guided by a desire for peace and had never pursued aggressive aims. The conclusion of a treaty between the USSR and Germany had cut the ground from under the feet of some people in Europe, especially those who wanted to set Germany against the Soviet Union and the USSR against Germany. I thought it was possible to avert a military conflict between Germany and Poland though the relationships between those countries were very tense. The conclusion of a Non-Aggression Pact between the Soviet Union and Germany created an element of stability in the present unstable international situation.

As regards the Far East, as could be seen from the press, the Japanese Government was protesting against Germany's putting an end to the anti-Comintern pact.²⁴ Japanese newspapers were saying openly that the Non-Aggression Pact between the USSR and Germany had led to Japan's isolation and to mounting difficulties for Japan, and this was undoubtedly of advantage to the liberation struggle of the Chinese people.

What conclusions could be drawn? (1) The Non-Aggression treaty between the Soviet Union and Germany had put an end to the anti-Comintern Pact. (2) It had lessened the tension that had existed in international relations prior to its conclusion.

Yang Tse asked whether it was true that the English and French Missions had left the Soviet Union. He wanted to know the results of the negotiations and whether they would be resumed.

I replied that the negotiations with England and France had been under way over a period of five months; the departure of the delegations was one episode in these negotiations. Delegations came and went, but the question of the struggle for peace remained. Their departure was not a result of the conclusion of a non-aggression pact between the USSR and Germany, but the result of a lack of agreement on a number of questions. If England and France accepted the Soviet Government's proposals, there still might be a possibility of concluding a treaty with them. The Soviet Union had treaties of non-aggression with Poland and with other countries, and these treaties remained fully in force. At the present time the negotiations were broken off, and their resumption depended on England and France.

Yang Tse asked how I assessed the statement by Chamberlain that England would not allow Germany to take over Danzig and whether I considered a clash between Germany and Poland to be possible.

I replied that the present situation was very tense; on both sides of the border there were hundreds of thousands of mobilized soldiers, and in such cases one incident was enough for hostilities to break out.

Japan, said Yang Tse, had found herself in an isolated position in the Far East, but precisely for that reason Japan would seek an agreement with England.

I replied that so far as could be judged by the Japanese press, Japan would seek co-operation with the USA and increase pressure

above all on China, and then on England and the Soviet Union. The Japanese were maintaining a firm line aimed at enslaving China. It was hard to say what concessions the Japanese would make to the Americans. At present the Japanese were in a very difficult situation. Judging by the Japanese and foreign press, they were now very much confused. A Japanese government statement on questions relating to its future policy was expected within the next few days. Now that she had seized Tientsin, Peiping, Shanghai, Shantow, Canton and tens of towns where England's financial and economic interests were very great, was encircling Hongkong and destroying English trade, seizing her transport, disorganizing her factories and banks, Japan would hardly accept a compromise with England, though sentiments of capitulation were very strong in England. This meant that the struggle between Japan and England would in all probability continue to grow more and more acute.

Before taking leave, Yang Tse expressed his gratitude for the information he had kindly been given and promised to forward it to his Government. In addition, in view of the complexity of the international situation, he asked to be kept informed about the developments. I replied that at present the international situation was indeed very complex and that this made all the more urgent the speediest possible formalization of Panyushkin as Plenipotentiary Representative so that he could systematically inform the Chinese Government and the Government of the USSR on questions of interest to both Governments.

Deputy People's Commissar
for Foreign Affairs
Lozovsky

From the archives.

No. 446. Interview with the Head of the Soviet Military Mission, K. Y. Voroshilov, on the Negotiations with the Military Missions of Britain and France

August 27, 1939

A correspondent of *Izvestia* submitted to the head of the Soviet Military Mission, Comrade Voroshilov, a list of questions, to which Comrade Voroshilov gave the following answers.

Q. What was the outcome of the negotiations with the Military Missions of England and France?

A. The negotiations were broken off because of the serious differences of opinion that were revealed. The Military Missions have left Moscow for home.

Q. May one know what these differences of opinion were?

A. The Soviet Military Mission considered that, since the USSR has no common frontier with the aggressor, it can only help France, England and Poland if its troops are allowed to pass through Polish territory there being no other routes by which Soviet forces can make contact with the forces of the aggressor. Just as in the last World War the English and American forces would not have been able to afford military co-operation to the armed forces of France, had they not been able to operate on French territory, so now the Soviet armed forces would not be able to afford military co-operation to the armed forces of France and England, unless they were admitted to Polish territory.

Despite its obvious soundness, the French and English Military Missions did not agree with the position of the Soviet Mission, and the Polish Government openly declared that it did not need any military assistance from the USSR and would not accept it.

This rendered impossible any military co-operation between the USSR and these countries.

Therein lie the differences of opinion, and that was what caused the consequent breakdown of the negotiations.

Q. At the time of the negotiations, was there any talk of helping Poland with raw materials and military supplies?

A. No, there was no talk of that. The question of assistance in the form of raw materials and military supplies is a commercial one and there is no need to conclude a mutual assistance pact, still less a military convention, in order to provide Poland with raw materials and military supplies. The United States of America and a number of other States have no mutual assistance pacts or military conventions with Japan and yet for the last two years they have been selling raw materials and military supplies to the Japanese, despite the fact that Japan is in a state of war with China. The type of assistance discussed at the time of the negotiations was not assistance with raw materials or military supplies but with troops.

Q. The diplomatic correspondent of the *Daily Herald* writes that the English and French Military Missions asked the Soviet Mission whether the USSR was prepared to assist Poland with aeroplanes and ammunition and to keep the Red Army in readiness on the frontier, and that the Soviet Military Mission replied to this question with the proposal "to occupy, immediately after the outbreak of war, Wilno and Novogrudek on the northeast and the Provinces of Lwow, Tarnopol and Stanislaw on the southeast, so that, if required to do so, the Red Army could, from these areas, give military support to the Poles."

In your opinion, does this report by the diplomatic correspondent of the *Daily Herald* correspond to the facts?

A. That report is false from start to finish, its author is an insolent liar, and the paper which published this deceitful report by its diplomatic correspondent is a libelous paper.

Q. The Reuters Agency has announced on the radio: "Today Vo-

roshilov informed the heads of the English and French Military Missions that, in view of the conclusion of a non-aggression pact between the USSR and Germany, the Soviet Government considers that there is no point in continuing negotiations with England and France."

Does this announcement of Reuters correspond to the facts?

A. No, it does not. The military negotiations with England and France were not broken off because the USSR had concluded a non-aggression pact with Germany; on the contrary, the USSR concluded the non-aggression pact with Germany because, amongst other things, the military negotiations with France and England had reached a deadlock as a result of insurmountable differences of opinion.

From *Izvestia*, No. 198 (6968),
August 27, 1939.

No. 447. Telegram from the People's Commissar for Defence of the USSR to the Command of the Soviet Forces in the Mongolian People's Republic

August 29, 1939

I congratulate the gallant defenders of the Soviet Motherland, the glorious fighters of Khalkhin Gol, on their brilliant victory over the Japanese forces.

In the battles with the insolent Japanese invaders our units have been defending not only the Mongolian People's Republic, which is a friend of the Soviet Union, and not only the inviolability of treaties concluded by the Soviet Government,¹⁵⁰ but also Soviet territory from Lake Baikal to Vladivostok. The provocative Japanese attempt to seize MPR territory pursued the goal of creating a bridgehead for an attack on the USSR, on Soviet Transbaikalian territory.

Together with MPR forces, Red Army units under the able leadership of their Command encircled the Japanese invaders and routed them. The object lessons of Lake Hasan proved insufficient for the Japanese generals; they sought revenge, and received a new blow—doubly as powerful as the one they had received at Hasan. Lake Buir Nor proved just as unfriendly to the Japanese invaders as Lake Hasan. Both at Hasan and at Buir Nor the Japanese generals were thoroughly beaten by the gallant workers' and peasants' units. In the area of the Khalkhin Gol river the Japanese forces were surrounded and destroyed by the accurate fire of our artillerymen, tankmen, airmen and heroic infantrymen. Captured documents, battle trophies and prisoners attest to the destruction of two Japanese divisions and the complete disintegration of the Hinggan forces of the enemy.

Our Red Army men, commanders, commissars and political instructors went into battle under the glorious banner of the Bolshevik Party—and they won. The names of many thousands of Khalkhin Gol fighters will be inscribed in the history of the heroic struggle of the Red Army for the independence of the Soviet people, for their honour, dignity and prosperity.

Comrades, do not forget the perfidy of the enemy; be vigilant and always ready to deal the enemy a new crushing blow if he dares to resume the provocation.

The Red Army is the child of the great Soviet people. Its detachment which operated at Khalkhin Gol felt behind it the entire strength and might of our invincible Motherland, and the entire love of the Soviet people for their soldiers.

You have honourably justified the trust vested in you by the Soviet Government and the Bolshevik Party.

I warmly congratulate all the Red Army men, commanders, commissars and political instructors on this outstanding victory of Soviet arms. The Government has already decorated the heroic Red Army men and their commanders who have especially distinguished themselves; to these I extend special congratulations and I firmly shake them by the hand. I shall be expecting those worthy of the honour to be recommended for decorations and this applies in the first instance to entire units that have distinguished themselves in the battles with the enemy.

I congratulate all comrades, soldiers and commanders, on the high award with which the Soviet Government has decorated your heroic leaders, the glorious sons of our Motherland, Comrades Zhukov, * Nikishev, ** Shtern, *** and Biryukov. ****

K. Voroshilov

From the archives.

No. 448. Telegram from the Acting Military Attaché of the USSR in Japan to the Red Army General Staff

August 31, 1939

With the advent to power of the Abe ***** Cabinet Japan's policy will, in our opinion, basically remain as it was before:

* Commander of the Soviet Army Group in the MPR.

** Member of the War Council of the Soviet Army Group in the MPR.

*** Commander of the Front Group of Soviet and Mongolian forces.

**** Member of the War Council of the Front Group of Soviet and Mongolian forces.

***** Prime Minister of Japan. August 1939-January 1940.

1. Continuance of aggressive actions on the mainland.
2. Intensification of the country's war preparation.
3. Expansion of foreign trade.
4. Establishment of friendly relations with countries that sympathize with Japan's true intentions, while maintaining an independent foreign policy.

It is to be expected that measures will be taken to bring about a settlement in relations with the USA and Britain and that a provocative policy in respect of the USSR will be continued.

L. Mishin

From the archives.

No. 449. Soviet Press Communique on the Liquidation of the Remnants of Japano-Manchurian Forces in the Frontier Zone of the MPR

September 1, 1939

According to a report issued by the Headquarters of the Mongolian-Soviet forces in the MPR, from August 5 to 17 in the area east of the river Khalkhin Gol skirmishes occurred between small reconnaissance groups of the Mongolian-Soviet and the Japano-Manchurian forces. Several times during this period Japanese aircraft attempted to penetrate into the territory of the MPR, but these attempts were repulsed by the Mongolian-Soviet air force. In the air battles which occurred as the invading Japanese aircraft were being repulsed the Mongolian-Soviet air force shot down 31 Japanese planes, from August 5 to 17. The Mongolian-Soviet air force lost 7 planes.

On August 17, having mustered new forces, the Japano-Manchurian troops attacked the positions of the Mongolian-Soviet forces on the eastern bank of Khalkhin Gol, six kilometres east of the river, and attempted to occupy several important dominating positions.

Throughout August 17, 18 and 19 the Mongolian-Soviet forces beat off the attacks of the Japano-Manchurian forces and threw them back to their initial positions, forcing them to go over to the defensive.

On August 20, the Mongolian-Soviet troops, together with the Mongolian-Soviet air force, mounted an offensive all along the line east of the Khalkhin Gol. Between August 21 and 28 the Japano-Manchurian forces, surrounded on both flanks by the Mongolian-Soviet forces and sustaining heavy losses in manpower and materiel, were liquidated.

Attempts by small units of Japano-Manchurians to resume the offensive were beaten back by the Mongolian-Soviet forces. On the

night of August 28 and in the early morning of August 29 the remnants of the Japano-Manchurian forces were liquidated on the territory of the MPR and the Mongolian-Soviet forces took up strong positions on a line following the state frontier of the MPR.

294 Manchurians with their weapons, led by officers of the 14th Infantry Regiment of the 1st Mixed Brigade of the Manchurian forces, voluntarily went over to the side of the Mongolian-Soviet forces.

In liquidating the Japano-Manchurian units, the Mongolian-Soviet forces captured five 155-mm guns, seven 150-mm guns, twelve 105-mm guns, three 122-mm guns, fifty 75-mm guns, and sixty-seven 37-mm guns; altogether 144 artillery pieces, 67 heavy machine-guns, 98 light machine-guns, 36 mine throwers, 9,000 rifles, 12,000 shells of various calibre, 8 tanks, 8 armoured cars, 14 tractors, 68 trucks, and 19 light motor vehicles.

To help the ground forces under attack, large formations of Japanese air force went into battle. In several air battles which took place from August 20 to 27 the Mongolian-Soviet air force shot down 164 Japanese aircraft, including 123 fighters, 36 bombers and 5 multi-seater staff aircraft. In this period the Mongolian-Soviet aviation lost 16 aircraft.

In addition, on August 28 the Mongolian-Soviet air force shot down eleven Japanese aircraft, while the Mongolian-Soviet air force sustained no losses; on August 29, eight Japanese aircraft were shot down, while the Mongolian-Soviet air force lost one aircraft, and on August 30 twenty-one Japanese aircraft were shot down, while the Mongolian-Soviet air force lost one aircraft.

From *Pravda*, No. 242 (7927),
September 1, 1939.

Notes

1. The Munich Agreement on the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia was the outcome of the shameful policy of connivance at German aggression which the ruling circles of Britain, France and the USA had been pursuing for several years.

The danger of a German attack on Czechoslovakia became imminent after Germany's seizure of Austria. In a statement issued on March 17, 1938 the Soviet Government noted that the seizure of Austria posed a threat to Czechoslovakia. It expressed its readiness "to participate in collective actions ... aimed at checking further aggression." To these ends it proposed to the Governments of the Western countries that an international conference be convened (*Izvestia*, March 18, 1938).

The Soviet Government repeatedly assured the Government of Czechoslovakia that the Soviet Union would meet its obligations under the 1935 Soviet-Czechoslovak Treaty of Mutual Assistance. In a conversation with C. Gottwald in mid-May 1938, J. V. Stalin said that the USSR would render military assistance to Czechoslovakia even without French participation if Czechoslovakia defended herself and requested assistance. This had not been envisaged in the Soviet-Czechoslovak Treaty under which the Soviet Union was obliged to render assistance to Czechoslovakia together with France. In the critical days of September 1938 the Soviet Government repeatedly affirmed its readiness "immediately and effectively" to implement the Soviet-Czechoslovak Treaty together with France (*New Documents on the History of Munich*, Moscow, 1958, p. 105).

The Western Powers—Britain, France and the USA—did not support the Soviet proposal for an international conference to work out practical measures to counter fascist aggression. In pursuing a policy of canalizing Germany's aggression towards the East, the Western Powers took the path of collusion with the Hitlerites at the expense of Czechoslovakia. The British Government was particularly active in this respect. During the May crisis it made clear to France and Germany that Britain would not fight over Czechoslovakia (see Note 74). In subsequent months, the British and French Governments exerted constant pressure on Czechoslovakia, while at the same time making a frenzied effort to "save" the world "at any price"—even if it meant the division of Czechoslovakia. This purpose was served by Chamberlain's meetings with Hitler at Berchtesgaden and Godesberg (see Note 77), at which attempts were made to put the stamp of legal approval on international arbitrariness.

In their attempt to reach an understanding with Nazi Germany on the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia Britain and France received considerable encouragement from American diplomacy (see Note 31).

On September 29-30, 1938, a conference was held in Munich, attended by

the heads of Government of four countries—Britain, France, Germany and Italy. At this conference, at which no representatives from Czechoslovakia were present, an agreement was reached on the detachment of the Sudetenland from Czechoslovakia and its incorporation in Germany. The territory ceded to Germany under this agreement was divided into five zones. Four zones were to be occupied by the Hitlerites by October 7, 1938. In the fifth zone a plebiscite was to be held under the supervision of an international commission which would be set up in Munich and which would consist of representatives of the four Powers and Czechoslovakia. The four Powers undertook to guarantee Czechoslovakia's new frontiers. However, subsequent events showed that the promises to guarantee Czechoslovakia's frontiers and the setting up of the international commission were designed to deceive public opinion.

As a result of the Munich collusion Czechoslovakia lost about one-third of her territory and population. She was deprived of her natural boundaries and frontier fortifications and found herself disarmed in the face of the aggressor. She also lost her economically most developed regions and her main sources of mineral raw materials. The new frontiers cut across and interfered with the country's major transport links. The seizure by the Hitlerites of a part of Czechoslovakia's territory increased Germany's military strength.

At the same time the Munich Agreement considerably weakened the positions of other European states, particularly, France, who "lost her most reliable ally in Central Europe" (see Document No. 16). The Munich Agreement also strengthened the hand of the defeatist elements among the ruling quarters of the countries of Southeastern Europe.

The Munich Agreement rendered meaningless the Soviet-Czechoslovak Treaty and greatly reduced the significance of the 1935 Soviet-French Treaty of Mutual Assistance. In effect, the British and French moves gave the *coup de grace* to the idea of collective security. As the well-known American publicist Walter Lippmann was to write later, "in sacrificing Czechoslovakia to Hitler, Britain and France were really sacrificing their alliance with Russia." This was done, in his words, "in a last vain hope that Germany and Russia would fight and exhaust one another" (W. Lippmann, *U.S. Foreign Policy. Shield of the Republic*, Boston, 1943, pp. 104, 116).

The Munich Agreement was illegal from the very beginning as it was incompatible with the basic principles of international law. The Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation and Mutual Assistance between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic signed on May 6, 1938, noted that "the Munich Agreement of September 29, 1938 was reached under the threat of aggressive war and the use of force against Czechoslovakia, that it constituted a part of Nazi Germany's criminal conspiracy against peace and a gross violation of the basic norms of international law and that therefore it is invalid from the very beginning, with all the consequences ensuing therefrom" (*Pravda*, May 7, 1970).

2. The Anglo-German Declaration signed on September 30, 1938 at Munich on Chamberlain's initiative was a solemn mutual non-aggression pledge by Britain and Germany. It was a logical sequel to the Munich collusion between Chamberlain and Hitler. In return for Germany's undertaking not to attack Britain, the Chamberlain Government gave the Hitlerites a free hand in Eastern Europe, particularly in respect of the USSR. Both this Declaration and a similar Franco-German Declaration of December 6, 1938 (see Document No. 64) were a product of the entire Munich policy of Chamberlain and Daladier. They deluded broad circles of the public in Britain and France by creating the impression that the war menace had already passed.

Subsequent developments proved how short-sighted were the policies of the British and French Governments which sought agreement with the Nazi aggressors at the expense of other countries and peoples.

3. A reference to the Anglo-German Naval Pact of June 18, 1935. The main points of that agreement were as follows: the German navy should not exceed 35 per cent of the tonnage of the aggregate naval forces of the British Com-

monwealth of Nations; a ratio of 35 : 100 was to be applied both to the general tonnage and to individual classes of warships; Germany, however, was entitled to a submarine fleet equal in tonnage to the aggregate tonnage of the submarine fleet of the British Commonwealth of Nations, but for the time being she undertook to maintain a submarine fleet not exceeding 45 per cent of the tonnage of Britain's (*Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945, Series C, Vol. IV, pp. 323-326*).

The signing of the Anglo-German Naval Pact, whereby Britain unilaterally sanctioned the violation by Hitler of the military restrictions imposed on Germany by the Peace Treaty of Versailles, was clear evidence that the British Government was conducting a policy of connivance at German aggression. The increase of the German naval force permitted by the Pact posed a serious threat for the USSR and other countries situated along the Baltic Sea. Churchill admits in his *Memoirs* that the British Government agreed to an increase of the German naval force so as to permit it to become "master of the Baltic" (W. Churchill, *The Second World War, Vol. 1, Boston, 1948, p. 140*).

In December 1938 Germany told Britain that she was going to build a submarine fleet equal in tonnage to Britain's. In April 1939 Nazi Germany denounced the Anglo-German Naval Pact.

4. On September 30, 1938, the Council of the League of Nations discussed a report prepared by the Council's Far-East Advisory Committee concerning an appeal by the Chinese Government in connection with Japan's aggression against China. The report said that Japan's military operations against China "can be justified neither on the basis of existing legal instruments nor on that of the right of self-defence, and that they are in contravention of Japan's obligations under the Nine-Power Treaty of February 6th, 1922, and under the Pact of Paris of August 27th, 1928..." (see Notes 42 and 95). However, the Committee went no further than noting that "China, in her heroic struggle against the invader, has a right to the sympathy and aid of the other Members of the League." The report said nothing about collective measures to assist China. (*League of Nations. Official Journal, November 1938, pp. 878-879*).

Addressing the Council on September 30, the representative of China pointed out that the report was not satisfactory to his Government. He expressed regret that the Council had been unable to take collective action in fulfilment of Article 16 of the Covenant of the League (*Ibid.*, p. 879).

The statements by the representatives of Britain, France, Belgium and some other countries showed that their Governments had no intention of taking any effective measures to help China. Of the Members of the League of Nations the Soviet Union alone both called for taking a collective stand against aggression and actually rendered economic and military assistance to the Chinese people in their struggle against aggression (see Note 5).

5. The Soviet Government rendered the Chinese people, who were waging a just struggle against the Japanese aggressors, both political and moral support, and considerable economic and military assistance.

In 1938 the Soviet Union signed two agreements with China (on March 1 and on July 1) under which the Soviet Government extended credit to the Chinese Government to the amount of 100 million US dollars for purchases of military equipment and supplies and other materials in the USSR.

In accordance with the agreement of March 1, 1938, the authorized representatives of the two Governments (A. I. Mikoyan, Deputy Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR, and Yang Tse, the Chinese Ambassador in the USSR) signed in March 1938 three contracts for the delivery to China of military equipment and supplies worth approximately 50 million US dollars. Under these contracts, the USSR delivered to China 297 aircraft, 82 tanks, 425 guns and howitzers, 1,825 machine guns, 400 motor vehicles, 360,000 shells and 10 million rifle cartridges, and other military equipment.

Under the fourth contract concluded in accordance with the agreement of July 1, 1938, the Soviet Union delivered to China 180 aircraft, 300 guns, 1,500 light machine guns, 500 heavy machine guns, 300 trucks, aircraft engines, spare

parts, shells, cartridges, and other military equipment worth approximately 30 million US dollars (Central Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Trade of the USSR). For information on further Soviet assistance to China see Documents Nos. 334 and 335.

6. A reference to the Soviet-Czechoslovak Treaty of Mutual Assistance of May 16, 1935. This Treaty was similar in content to the Soviet-French Treaty (see Note 7). However, a Protocol to the Treaty contained the reservation that the undertakings of mutual assistance would be effective only on condition that "France renders assistance to the party that falls victim to an attack" (*Pravda*, May 18, 1935).
7. A reference to the Soviet-French Treaty of Mutual Assistance of May 2, 1935. Under the Treaty the contracting Parties would immediately consult together in the event of a threat of an attack by a European State on either of them. The basic clause of the Treaty, Article 2, said that if the USSR or France were attacked by a European State they would "immediately render each other assistance and support" (*Pravda*, May 4, 1935).
8. With reference to the possibility of Japan taking part in a war against the Soviet Union, R. Sorge reported in his telegram of September 14, 1938 that Japanese involvement in a possible European war would depend on the extent to which that war was directed against the USSR. He also noted the mounting resolve of the Japanese "to begin war against the USSR whenever the USSR should be involved in a European war."

9. On October 10, 1938, Lord Winterton, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and a member of the British Government, made a speech at Shoreham in which he misrepresented the Soviet position at the time of the Czechoslovak crisis. In this connection the Soviet Ambassador in London issued a Soviet Embassy statement to the press. Taking into account Lord Winterton's high position in the British Government the Ambassador also lodged a protest with Halifax, the British Foreign Secretary.

In his note of protest, the Ambassador said that "during the last few weeks several very highly placed persons in Britain and France, including persons holding important official posts, have been spreading fabrications about the position of the USSR in respect of Czechoslovakia. These fabrications amounted to saying that the USSR did not intend to fulfil its obligations under the Soviet-Czechoslovak Pact. "The purpose of this slander," the Ambassador pointed out, "was perfectly clear: in this way its disseminators attempted to place upon the USSR the responsibility for their own systematic retreats in the face of the aggressor, which, as everyone knows, culminated in the Munich Agreement." The Ambassador noted that "recent debates in the British Parliament have made perfectly clear to every British citizen and, still more so, to every member of the Cabinet one simple thing: the USSR did not and does not have anything to do either with the policy that led to Munich or with the Munich Agreement itself." The Ambassador declared that the Agreement "will have disastrous consequences for the world in our time" and "will be severely condemned by history."

Halifax replied that he would inform Chamberlain of the Soviet protest and would also talk to Winterton, and that "on his part, he would make every effort to ensure that such incidents should not occur in future." (Soviet Foreign Policy Archives).

10. On September 2, 1870, at the time of the Franco-Prussian War, the French army sustained a major defeat in the battle of Sedan. The remnants of the French army led by Napoleon III were surrounded and besieged in the Sedan fortress. On the orders of Napoleon III the white flag was hoisted, and the 100,000-strong French army surrendered together with the Emperor. Ever since then the word "Sedan" has become synonymous with a major political or military defeat.

11. In the summer of 1938 von Dirksen, the German Ambassador in London, had had several conversations with the US Ambassador to Britain, Joseph Kennedy. In a conversation on June 13, 1938 Kennedy said that "the United States would have to establish friendly relations with Germany." Kennedy, von Dirksen observed, "repeatedly expressed his conviction that in economic matters Germany had to have a free hand in the East as well as in the Southeast. He took a very pessimistic view of the situation in the Soviet Union" (*Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945, Series D, Vol. 1, pp. 713-718*). Thus, the US Ambassador was plainly saying that the United States had no intention of taking action against German aggression in the East, particularly if it was directed against the USSR.

In another conversation, on July 20, 1938, Kennedy, who had just returned to London from the USA, and who was obviously acting on Washington's instructions, set out the position of the United States in respect of European problems in this way. "The United States," wrote von Dirksen in reference to his conversation with Kennedy, "regards itself as the protector and helper of England, which in turn, however, has to pay for this help with subservience and obedience. Furthermore, his remarks showed very clearly that the present Government of the United States supports the Chamberlain Cabinet and assists it in overcoming all difficulties; in this sense is to be interpreted... the support of Chamberlain's desire for a settlement with Germany—support which would undoubtedly be sufficient to break the resistance of the British opposition" (*Ibid.*, pp. 721-723).

During these conversations Kennedy expressed a desire to go to Germany to meet leading Nazi officials. In the American Ambassador's view, such a visit would promote friendly relations between the USA and Germany.

12. Documents of the Nazi German Foreign Ministry show that this attitude of the German press reflected the policy of the Government (*Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945, Series D, Vol. IV, p. 52*).
13. The seizure of Austria by Nazi Germany in March 1938 raised the question of repayment by the German Government of Austria's foreign debts to Britain, the United States, France and other countries.

On April 12, 1938 the British Government said that it assumed that Germany would accept responsibility for the whole of Austria's foreign debt. In its statement of reply of May 12, 1938 the German Government informed Britain that it did not consider it possible to repay the foreign debts of the former Austrian Government. There began protracted negotiations on this subject but Germany never agreed to repay all of Austria's foreign debts.

14. For several years before the war Nazi Germany experienced great economic and financial difficulties owing primarily to her enormous rearmament programme. Representatives of British and French industrial and financial circles were not averse to rendering Germany economic assistance, hoping thereby to prompt her to take a less hostile attitude to the Western Powers and to encourage her to launch a campaign of expansion towards the East.

To these ends, at the request of the British Government, the former Prime Minister of Belgium, Van Zeeland, prepared a report on the possibilities of closer economic and political co-operation between the USA, Britain, France, Germany and Italy. In his report, which was published in January 1938, Van Zeeland spoke in favour of broadening international economic co-operation, lowering customs tariffs, and abolishing all duties, taxes and other restrictions on the export of raw materials. Van Zeeland regarded as an essential condition for all these economic measures the removal of currency controls and of restrictions in the field of trade payments. It was proposed that a special fund be set up under the auspices of the Bank for International Settlements to subsidize purchases of primary products by countries "poor in raw materials". In effect, this was a camouflaged proposal to extend big loans to Germany and Italy.

In his report Van Zeeland included several proposals that had been sub-

mitted to him concerning a revision of the mandate system of the League of Nations and the organizing of so-called "colonial societies". With respect to the latter the essential idea was that instead of a direct transfer of colonies to Germany she should be given an opportunity to exploit colonial countries through participation in special "colonial societies". The Nazi press welcomed the idea, noting that the Van Zeeland Plan was a "step forward" as compared with all the preceding plans of this kind.

In the concluding part of his report Van Zeeland suggested convening a preliminary conference of several countries, "at least France, Britain, the USA, Germany and Italy," to discuss his plan. However, the political situation in Europe at the time was not conducive to the convening of such a conference.

15. Early in 1938 the British Government began negotiations with Italy which ended on April 16, 1938 with the signing of the Anglo-Italian Agreement.

Under the Agreement, the two Sides reaffirmed their Declaration of January 2, 1937 on respect for the *status quo* in the Western Mediterranean and agreed to exchange military information concerning the positioning of their troops on the coast of the Mediterranean and Red Seas and in the Gulf of Aden. The two Governments agreed to notify each other in advance of any decision to build new naval or air bases in the Mediterranean (east of 19°E.) and in the Red Sea or the approaches thereto.

Under the Agreement Britain recognized Italy's seizure of Ethiopia and also Italy's parity rights in Saudi Arabia and the Yemen and acknowledged the right of free passage of Italian ships through the Suez canal at all times. Italy, for her part, undertook immediately to withdraw some Italian "volunteers" from Spain and to withdraw the remainder after the end of the Civil War; to reduce the strength of her forces in Libya, to end anti-British propaganda in the Arab countries and to guarantee British interests in the region of Lake Tsana (Ethiopia).

The Agreement aroused a controversy within British ruling quarters. Italy's failure to withdraw her forces from Spain and the new developments in Europe (the seizure of Austria by Nazi Germany and the Czechoslovak crisis) prevented Chamberlain from pushing the Anglo-Italian Agreement through Parliament and securing its ratification.

After the Munich Conference the Chamberlain Government, having secured an oral pledge by Italy to withdraw 10,000 Italian soldiers from Spain, submitted the Anglo-Italian Agreement for Parliamentary approval. In his speech to the House of Commons on November 2, 1938, Chamberlain declared that since the signing of the Agreement there had been no differences between Britain and Italy, that Italy had returned to the Non-Intervention Committee, and that Mussolini and Hitler had assured him at Munich that they had no territorial ambitions in Spain. Chamberlain urged that the Anglo-Italian Agreement be carried into effect immediately, saying that this would be "an important advance towards the general appeasement of Europe" (*Parliamentary Debates. House of Commons*, Vol. 340, Col. 208).

On November 16, 1938 the Anglo-Italian Agreement entered into force.

16. The Little Entente was a political alliance of the bourgeois Governments of Czechoslovakia, Rumania and Yugoslavia. It was formed after the First World War with the assistance of France. From the very outset the Little Entente was largely an instrument of French imperialism in Europe.

The legal foundations for the formation of the Little Entente consisted of the Czechoslovak-Yugoslav, the Czechoslovak-Rumanian and the Yugoslav-Rumanian Treaties signed in 1920-21. In 1924-27 France concluded military-political agreements with the members of the Little Entente.

On February 16, 1933, soon after the establishment of the Nazi dictatorship in Germany, representatives of the Little Entente countries signed the so-called "Organization Pact" which prolonged indefinitely the treaties concluded between them and set up a Council of the Little Entente to co-ordinate the foreign policy of Rumania, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia.

The German threat, on the one hand, and the growth of the international

prestige of the USSR and its consistent struggle for peace, on the other, led to changes in the attitude of the Little Entente countries, which had been sharply hostile before this, to the Soviet Union. To strengthen their international position the Little Entente countries signed, jointly with the USSR, the London Protocol of 1933 on the definition of aggression. In 1934 diplomatic relations were established between the Soviet Union and two members of the Little Entente, Rumania and Czechoslovakia. On May 16, 1935, that is, after the conclusion of the Soviet-French Treaty of Mutual Assistance, a similar treaty was signed between the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia (see Note 6).

However, the Governments of the Little Entente countries were inconsistent in their policies and failed to co-operate with the USSR in organizing joint action to rebuff German aggression. The Munich collusion, which sanctioned the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia by Germany, put an end to the existence of the Little Entente.

17. On December 14, 1933, in view of Germany's aggressive plans against the Baltic region, the Soviet Government suggested to the Polish Government that a joint Soviet-Polish Declaration (to be called "Baltic Declaration") be issued in which the two countries would declare their firm determination to defend peace in Eastern Europe and state that in the event of a threat to the Baltic States they would consult together. Such a Declaration could have been of great significance for the preservation of peace in the Baltic region.

On December 19, 1933, the Polish Government announced that in principle it accepted the Soviet proposal. However, at that time the Polish Government was conducting secret negotiations with Nazi Germany. After the signing on January 26, 1934, of the German-Polish Declaration of Friendship and Non-Aggression (see Note 22) Poland took a negative stand towards any measures connected with collective defence of peace against German aggression. On February 3, 1934, the Polish Government notified the Soviet Government that it no longer considered relevant the question of a Soviet-Polish Declaration.

18. On December 28, 1933, the Soviet Government proposed that a regional agreement on mutual defence against aggression by Germany (to be called "the Eastern Regional Pact") be concluded between the USSR, France, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Finland and Belgium. It was subsequently decided, in accordance with a British proposal, to invite Germany to join the Pact. The conclusion of the Pact could have been a most important measure for ensuring peace and security in Europe.

However, Germany came out against the conclusion of such a Pact (Memorandum of the German Government of September 8, 1934). She obviously realized that such a Pact would block the implementation of her aggressive plans. The Pact could nevertheless have been concluded even without German participation, as the Soviet Government had suggested from the very beginning. However, Poland, which by that time had taken the path of co-operation with Germany, declared on September 27, 1934 that she would join the Pact only if Germany did the same.

19. The Four-Power Pact was signed in Rome on July 15, 1933 by representatives of Italy, Great Britain, France and Germany.

The initiator of the Four-Power Pact was Mussolini who handed a draft of the Treaty to British Prime Minister Macdonald and Foreign Secretary Simon in Rome on March 18, 1933. The French Government put forward its own counter-draft of the Four-Power Pact which formed the basis for the Treaty that was eventually signed.

Under the Treaty ("Pact of Accord and Co-Operation") the Governments of Britain, Germany, France and Italy, affirming loyalty to the obligations they had undertaken under the Covenant of the League of Nations, the Locarno Treaties and the Briand-Kellogg Pact, agreed to conduct a policy of effective co-operation. The signatories would jointly consider any proposals for the effective implementation of the League of Nations Covenant, in particular Article 10 (relating to guarantees of the territorial integrity of the member-coun-

tries of the League of Nations), Article 16 (relating to sanctions) and Article 19 (dealing with a revision of treaties and, consequently, of state borders). The parties to the Pact undertook to promote the success of the conference on disarmament. The Pact was to remain in force for a period of ten years (*Documents on Foreign Policy and International Law*, No. 6, Moscow, 1934, pp. 20-21).

The Four-Power Pact represented an attempt by British and French imperialist circles to resolve their contradictions with German and Italian fascism and to establish in Europe a directorate of the four Powers to the detriment of the interests of other European nations. The Pact held out a big potential danger for the countries of Eastern Europe, particularly, for the USSR. In some ways it was a forerunner of the Munich Agreement (see Document No. 1 and Note 1).

The Four-Power Pact aroused serious displeasure in many countries. It was severely criticized in France, and, consequently, it was not ratified and did not enter into force.

20. Operation "Green" was Hitler's plan for the seizure of Czechoslovakia. The plan was outlined in a directive issued by the War Minister of Nazi Germany, Blomberg, on June 24, 1937.

After Nazi Germany's seizure of Austria Hitler issued orders to begin preparations for the carrying out of Operation "Green" with due regard for the changed strategical situation. On May 30, 1938, he approved Operation "Green" in a modified form. It was to start on October 1, 1938, at the latest (*Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945*, Series D, Vol. II, pp. 357-362).

The plan envisaged political, diplomatic and propaganda measures and defined the tasks of the various branches of Nazi Germany's armed forces. The task of German diplomacy was to isolate Czechoslovakia internationally, recruit allies for taking part in aggression against Czechoslovakia and carry out a propaganda campaign of threats aimed at lowering the resistance of the Czechs and their possible allies. Hitler practically ruled out the likelihood of a clash with Britain and France over Czechoslovakia and thus it was planned to have only a light covering force on the Western frontier of Germany. On the other hand, Operation "Green" took into consideration the possibility of Soviet military support, particularly air support, to Czechoslovakia (*Ibid.*, p. 359).

In early October 1938 Nazi Germany succeeded in partially carrying out Operation "Green" when it seized the Sudeten region of Czechoslovakia following the collusion with Britain and France in Munich (see Document No. 1 and Note 1).

21. The Chamberlain Government, which came to power in Britain in May 1937, began actively pursuing a policy of rapprochement with Nazi Germany. In November 1937 Halifax, an influential member of the British Parliament, visited Germany. On November 19 he had a long talk with Hitler during which he lavished praises on the Führer, noting in particular the latter's transforming of Germany into a "Western bastion against Bolshevism". In explaining the attitude of the British Government, Halifax declared Britain's readiness to give Nazi Germany "a free hand in Eastern Europe" (in this connection Halifax mentioned Danzig, Austria and Czechoslovakia) on condition that Germany recarve the map of Europe through "peaceful evolution." The British Government expressed its willingness to enter into official negotiations with Germany for the settlement of other questions as well (*Documents and Materials Relating to the Eve of the Second World War*, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1948, pp. 10-48).

22. A reference to the Declaration of Non-Aggression between Germany and Poland signed in Berlin on January 26, 1934 (*Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945*, Series C, Vol. II, pp. 421-422).

The signing of the Polish-German Declaration was "one of the important phases in the preparation of German aggression. Hitler needed this Declaration to split the ranks of the advocates of collective security and to show that what

Europe required was not collective security but bilateral agreements... The German-Polish Declaration was undoubtedly the first serious breach in the edifice of collective security" (*Falsifiers of History. A Historical Survey*, Moscow, 1948, p. 14).

The assurances by the Hitlerites that they had no aggressive designs against Poland were given in bad faith. It is clear from published documents of the German Foreign Ministry that the Nazis decided to go no further than the signing of a joint German-Polish Declaration, and that they would not conclude a formal treaty of non-aggression with Poland in accordance with the standards of international law. In this the German Government proceeded from the assumption that it would be easier subsequently to violate such a declaration than a formal treaty, since in a declaration there would be no need to stipulate "recognition of the present eastern boundaries of Germany". (*Documents on German Foreign Policy. 1918-1945*, Series C, Vol. II, p. 145). Soon after the signing of the declaration Hitler told a group of his associates: "All our agreements with Poland have a purely temporary significance" (H. Rausching. *The Voice of Destruction (Hitler Speaks)*, New York, 1940, p. 119).

On April 27, 1939 Nazi Germany declared its annulment of the Polish-German Declaration of Non-Aggression.

23. In pursuing their predatory great-power policy, the ruling circles of bourgeois Poland also made repeated demands for colonies. In this matter, as in many others, the policy of the Polish bourgeoisie went hand in hand with the policy of fascist Germany. Polish diplomacy voluntarily undertook to defend the interests of Nazi Germany in the League of Nations after Germany staged a walk-out in 1933. From the rostrum of the League of Nations Polish diplomats did their best to justify the flagrant violations by Hitler of the Versailles and Locarno Treaties, such as the introduction in Germany of universal conscription, the abrogation of military restrictions, the introduction of Nazi forces into the demilitarized Rhine zone in 1936, and so on. In all major international conflicts in the pre-war period, including the seizure of Ethiopia by Italy, the Civil War in Spain, the Japanese attack on China, the Anschluss of Austria and the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia the position taken by the Polish Government came close to that of the aggressive states. The fact that the policy of the reactionary Polish Government was close to that of the Nazis was also evidenced by Hitler's invitation for Poland to join the Anti-Comintern Pact. Nazi Germany also supported to some extent Polish colonial demands, especially since they served as an additional argument in favour of Germany's own colonial claims.

Addressing the budget commission of the Sejm on January 12, 1937, Polish Foreign Minister Beck declared that questions of emigration and of the acquisition of raw materials were of great importance for Poland. She could no longer remain content with the old method of solving so-called colonial questions. It was essential, Beck emphasized, in the future to raise before the international community the question of the necessity of colonies for the Polish state. A similar demand was voiced on July 11, 1937, by a Polish general, Kwainiewski, at the "Festival of the Sea" in Gdynia. The special ceremony held to mark "Colonies Day" on April 18, 1938, turned into a noisy demonstration in support of the demand for overseas colonies for Poland. This campaign was directed on government instructions by General Sosnkowski. The churches conducted special services in support of the demand for colonies, and cinemas showed films on colonial subjects (*A History of Poland*, Vol. III, Moscow, 1958, p. 430).

On February 10, 1939, General Sosnkowski, speaking in Gdynia on the occasion of the launching of a new submarine, "Eagle," again emphasized that Poland must have colonies.

On March 11, 1939, the Supreme Council of the Camp of National Unity (the Polish ruling party) made public its programme on the colonial question. The programme stated that like the other great European Powers, Poland should have access to colonies. There was still enough land in Africa that was suitable for intensive economic exploitation and that could provide vitally

needed space for the Poles. "If Poland's colonial claims in respect of the country's economic and demographic requirements can be fully met only through the granting of territories over which Poland would enjoy sovereignty," the programme stated, "then it is necessary, as a first concrete task, also to take advantage of any opportunity that would afford Poland the possibility of acquiring colonial territories in some other form."

24. The Anti-Comintern Pact was concluded in Berlin on November 25, 1936 between Germany and Japan. According to the text of the Pact which was published at the time, its members undertook to inform one another about the activities of the Communist International and to wage a joint struggle against it. The main purpose of the Pact was indicated in a German-Japanese secret agreement which was concluded at the same time and which said that in the event of a conflict between one of the Parties to the Pact and the USSR they "will immediately consult on what measures to take to safeguard their common interests." The Parties to the Agreement declared that they "will conclude no political treaties with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics contrary to the spirit of this Agreement without mutual consent" (*Documents on German Foreign Policy. 1918-1945, Series D, Vol. 1, p. 734*).

On November 6, 1937 the Anti-Comintern Pact was joined by Italy, on February 24, 1939 by Hungary, and on March 27, 1939 by Franco's Spain. Later it was also joined by several other states allied with Germany and Japan in the Second World War.

25. In his speech before the National Assembly on October 4, 1939, Prime Minister Daladier of France, speaking on the results of the Munich Conference, attempted to justify the Munich collusion by saying that it had made possible the avoidance of the use of force, that it had given Czechoslovakia international guarantees of her security and so forth. Daladier called for an improvement of relations with Germany "which is our neighbour, which was our adversary and with which we are hoping to be able to establish a durable peace." In his speech Daladier made no mention of Soviet-French relations although France had a Pact of Mutual Assistance with the USSR (*Documents on International Affairs. 1938, Vol. 2, London, 1943, pp. 307-314*).
26. A reference to the arrival in Rome of the newly-appointed French Ambassador to Italy, François-Poncet, formerly the French Ambassador to Nazi Germany. A violent reactionary, François-Poncet sought to bring about a rapprochement between France and fascist Italy by securing agreement on the Spanish and other questions. At Munich, French Prime Minister Daladier, in his conversations with the fascist dictator of Italy, Mussolini, had expressed France's readiness to recognize *de facto* the fascist regime of Franco in Spain. To please the fascist rebels in Spain and their German and Italian patrons the French Government closed the Franco-Spanish frontier. This move made it impossible to bring in, through France, the supplies that were needed by Republican Spain, and thus put the Republican Government in a difficult situation.
27. On October 18, 1938, Hitler received French Ambassador François-Poncet at the Obersalzberg. François-Poncet, who was appointed French Ambassador to Italy, came to pay his farewell visit. The two men discussed the question of improving Franco-German relations. On behalf of the French Government, François-Poncet set forth several proposals as a possible basis for agreement between Germany and France. They included the final recognition of the Franco-German frontier, the holding of consultations between the two countries on complex foreign policy problems, the granting of a joint guarantee to Belgium, the prohibition or limitation of bombing with a view to "humanizing" warfare, and the conclusion of a "currency agreement" (*Documents on German Foreign Policy. 1918-1945, Series D, Vol. IV, pp. 441-442*).
- In the course of subsequent diplomatic negotiations it was agreed to sign on December 6, 1938, a Franco-German Declaration which in effect amounted to a pact of non-aggression between Germany and France (see Document No. 64).

28. A reference to the Agreement signed on January 7, 1935, by Mussolini and French Foreign Minister Laval, in accordance with which France ceded to Italy a part of her African colonial possessions neighbouring on Libya and Eritrea, and the Island of Dumeirah, and transferred to Italy 20 per cent of the shares of the Jibuti—Addis-Ababa (Ethiopia) railway. The Agreement also resolved the question of the status of Italian settlers in Tunisia. The most significant point about the Agreement was that under it France granted Italy complete freedom of action in respect of Ethiopia. Laval subsequently admitted that he had in fact "presented Ethiopia to Mussolini".

The Agreement played an important role in paving the ground for Italian aggression against Ethiopia. At the same time it failed to resolve Franco-Italian contradictions and to prevent a rapprochement between Italy and Germany. The latter was what France had most feared and to prevent it she had been willing to make concessions. In December 1938 Italy denounced the Agreement of 1935 and openly declared her new "natural claims".

29. Robert M. La Follette, Jr., was a liberal-minded Senator who, like his father, led a campaign to create a third party in the United States. In 1924 La Follette ran for president of the United States. His election platform called for curbing the monopolies, nationalization of water and rail transport and of the power industry; it called for reforms aimed at democratizing the system of government. In the field of foreign policy La Follette, an Isolationist, came out for outlawing war, reduction of armaments and abolition of conscription. He decried the foreign expansion of American capital, in particular, the Dawes Plan. The anti-monopolistic and democratic planks in his platform won support among certain sections of the farmers, the urban petty bourgeoisie and the workers. However, La Follette lost the election (he had about 5 million votes). In the pre-war years La Follette's speeches reflecting an isolationist point of view were objectively harmful to the cause of organizing collective resistance to the fascist aggressors and to the development of co-operation between the USA and the USSR.

30. Isolationism was a political trend that first appeared in the United States in the 18th century. The Isolationists were against the US Government pursuing an active policy outside the American continent. The rise and development of Isolationism, whose essence changed as time went on, was largely due to the geographical isolation of the American continent, the existence of vast markets inside the United States and on the American continent generally, and the presence of a large petty-bourgeois stratum that was not much interested in foreign markets.

Isolationism had often served as a platform for people of different political views, ranging from genuine opponents of imperialist policies to extreme reactionaries who exploited the slogans of Isolationism in their own interests (also see Notes 29 and 41).

31. American diplomacy played no small role in paving the way for the Munich collusion. Commenting on Chamberlain's meeting with Hitler in Berchtesgaden, US Secretary of State Hull told a press conference on September 15, 1938: "The historic conference today between the Prime Minister of Great Britain and the Chancellor of Germany is naturally being observed with the greatest interest by all nations which are deeply concerned in the preservation of peace" (C. Hull, *The Memoirs*, Vol. I, New York, 1948, p. 589).

The US Ambassadors to Britain and France (Joseph Kennedy and William Bullitt) actively supported the Anglo-French policy of "appeasing" Germany at the expense of Czechoslovakia. Bullitt even brought pressure to bear on the French Government, declaring that in the event of a Franco-German conflict France must not count on US support. He told the French Government that in the event of war the aircraft for which France had placed orders in the United States in May 1938, could not be delivered because of the Neutrality Legislation in the United States (G. Bonnet, *Défense de la Paix*, Genève, 1946, Vol. I, p. 212).

In the critical days of late September 1938 the United States intervened in the conflict in order to prevent a war between the Western Powers. Its actions were in effect no different from the measures taken by the British and French Governments. The statements issued by the US Government, which outwardly were thoughtful appeals for peace, were in fact, also an expression of the policy of "appeasing" the aggressors; in this case it meant dealing with Nazi Germany's aggressive designs on Czechoslovakia by "peaceful" ways. On September 26, 1938, President Roosevelt exhorted Hitler, Chamberlain, Daladier and Benes to make a new effort to prevent an armed conflict and to resolve all questions at issue through continued negotiations (*Foreign Relations of the United States, 1938, Vol. I, pp. 657-658*).

In the morning of September 27, Roosevelt sent a confidential message to Mussolini through the American Ambassador in Rome requesting his help "in the continuation of the efforts to arrive at an agreement of the questions at issue by negotiation or by other peaceful means rather than by resort to force" (*Ibid.*, p. 677).

In the evening of September 27, 1938, the US President sent another message, this time to Hitler, suggesting an immediate conference somewhere in Europe to be attended by representatives of all countries directly concerned with the Czechoslovak problem. "Continued negotiations," the President said, "remain the only way by which the immediate problem can be disposed of upon any lasting basis" (*Ibid.*, p. 685).

The British Munichmen highly appreciated the United States' support for their policy of appeasement. On September 29, 1938, in a conversation with US Ambassador Kennedy, British Foreign Secretary Halifax expressed the "thanks of His Majesty's Government for the help that the President had given by his intervention during the last two or three days" (*Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939, Third Series, Vol. II, p. 625*).

32. In a broadcast on October 3, 1938, Sumner Welles voiced what amounted to an approval of the Munich Agreement. Having registered his reluctance to discuss "the merits of the decisions, reached in Munich," he stated: "Every man and woman in the United States, however, shares in the universal feeling of relief that war has been averted." "Today," he went on to say, "perhaps more than at any time during the past two decades, there is presented the opportunity for the establishment by the nations of the world of a new world order based upon justice and upon law" (*Documents on International Affairs, 1938, Vol. II, London, 1943, p. 306*).
33. On November 11, 1938, a wave of Jewish pogroms swept Nazi Germany. Germany became a scene of mass killing of Jews coupled with the destruction and looting of their property. As subsequent events showed, this was not just one of a series of anti-Semitic campaigns regularly carried on in Nazi Germany but also provided an important source of revenue for the bankrupt Nazi treasury (much Jewish property was confiscated during the pogroms).
34. The Berlin-Rome Axis was a military-political alliance concluded by the fascist aggressors—Germany and Italy—in Berlin on October 25, 1936. Under the Agreement Germany recognized Italy's seizure of Ethiopia; the two states reaffirmed their recognition of the rebel government of Franco in Spain and devised measures to render it further assistance; and Germany and Italy agreed on the delimitation of spheres of economic penetration in the Balkans and the Danubian States. The creation of the Berlin-Rome Axis was the first step towards the formation of a legally constituted bloc of fascist aggressors. The next step was the signing of the so-called Anti-Comintern Pact by Germany and Japan on November 25, 1936 (see Note 24).
35. In the wake of Nazi Germany, Horthyist Hungary also advanced territorial claims against Czechoslovakia. Czechoslovak-Hungarian talks on this question began in October 1938. But no agreement was reached since Czechoslovakia

refused to meet Hungary's demands for the cession of Bratislava, Nitra and Kosice. The Hungarian Government, supported by Mussolini, asked Germany, Italy and Poland to arbitrate. Poland's participation was opposed by Germany, and the arbitration was conducted by Germany and Italy through their Foreign Ministers, Ribbentrop and Ciano.

By a decision taken on November 2, 1938, in Vienna (the so-called First Vienna Award) the southern areas of Slovakia and the Carpatho-Ukraine, with a population of over one million, were transferred to Hungary.

Earlier, on October 11, 1938, the Czechoslovak Government, under the pressure of Nazi Germany, agreed to the establishment of an autonomous Government of the Carpatho-Ukraine. The German Government was then in favour of autonomy for the Carpatho-Ukraine within Czechoslovakia. It did not support Polish-Hungarian plans for the incorporation of the whole of the Carpatho-Ukraine into Hungary which would mean the establishment of a common Polish-Hungarian frontier. This, in the opinion of the German Government, might hinder the implementation of further aggressive German plans (see Document No. 20).

The German press took advantage of the granting of autonomy to the Carpatho-Ukraine by launching a noisy campaign calling for the incorporation of the Soviet Ukraine into the Carpatho-Ukraine. The French and British bourgeois press also devoted considerable attention to these anti-Soviet German plans.

In March 1939, the Hungarian Government, with Hitler's consent, demanded in the form of an ultimatum that the Czechoslovak Government transfer the Carpatho-Ukraine to Hungary. On March 14, 1939, Hungarian troops occupied the Carpatho-Ukraine.

36. Turkish President Ataturk (Mustafa Kemal), leader of the Turkish people's liberation struggle against Anglo-Greek intervention and founder of the Turkish Republic, died on November 10, 1938. Together with Lenin, Ataturk laid the foundations of friendship and good-neighbourly relations between Soviet Russia and Turkey, which were embodied in the Moscow Treaty of March 16, 1921. Throughout his long tenure of office as President of Turkey Ataturk advocated the preservation and strengthening of friendship between Turkey and the USSR.
37. In May-June 1932 Inonu (Ismet-pasha), the then Turkish Prime Minister, headed a Turkish Government delegation which paid a friendly visit to the Soviet Union. During the visit Inonu had several meetings and conversations with Soviet Government leaders. In the course of these cordial and friendly talks many international problems of common interest were discussed, as well as questions relating to the further development of relations between the two countries. It was also agreed in principle that the Soviet Union would extend to Turkey long-term credits to the amount of 8 million US dollars for the development of her economy.
38. The election at Bridgewater on November 17, 1938, revealed some new tendencies in British public opinion. Quite unexpectedly for the British Conservatives, the election in this district, with its predominantly rural population, which had long been the mainstay of the Conservative Party, was won by an Independent Liberal, the journalist Vernon Bartlett. In the opinion of most British political analysts, the decisive role in Bartlett's victory was played by the mounting resentment of the British people against the Munich policy of the Chamberlain Government.
39. A reference to the Soviet Government statement to the Polish Government of September 23, 1938, in connection with the concentration of Polish troops at the frontier with Czechoslovakia. The statement warned the then reactionary Polish Government that if Polish forces invaded Czechoslovakia, the USSR would regard this as an act of aggression and it would denounce, without further warning, its Non-Aggression Pact with Poland (*New Documents Relating to the History of Munich*, Moscow, 1958, pp. 132-133).

40. A reference to the Franco-British talks held in Paris on November 24, 1938. Taking part in the talks were, on the British side, Prime Minister Chamberlain and Foreign Secretary Halifax, and on the French side, Prime Minister Daladier and Foreign Minister Bonnet. The discussions focused on the question of Anglo-French military co-operation. The British Government tried to avoid assuming any concrete obligations. Other subjects discussed included problems of European security, and particularly the Spanish question. (*Documents on British Foreign Policy. 1919-1939*, Third Series, Vol. III, pp. 285-311).

41. On August 31, 1935, the US Congress passed the Neutrality Act which banned the sale of war materials to any nations that were at war with each other (*Peace and War. United States Foreign Policy. 1931-1941*, Washington, 1943, pp. 266-271). This legislation which was enacted several days prior to fascist Italy's attack on Ethiopia placed the victim of aggression in a difficult situation as Ethiopia was thereby deprived of an opportunity to purchase arms in the United States.

On January 8, 1937, in connection with the Civil War and the foreign intervention in Spain, the US Congress passed a special resolution prohibiting the export of war materials to Spain (*Ibid.*, pp. 353-354). This new Act was harmful to the legitimate Government of Spain and favoured the rebels and the interventionists, Italy and Germany. Commenting on the US move, Franco declared that the American "neutrality legislation stopping export of war material to either side—the quick manner in which it was passed and carried into effect—is a gesture we nationalists will never forget" (R. Bendiner, *The Riddle of the State Department*, New York, 1942, p. 56).

On May 1, 1937, the US Congress passed a new Neutrality Act which, while preserving for an indefinite period of time the basic clauses of the previous neutrality legislation, laid down the so-called "cash-and-carry" principle, which was to be in force for a period of two years, in respect of purchases by foreign states of war materials in the USA (*Peace and War. United States Foreign Policy. 1931-1941*, Washington, 1943, pp. 355-365). This new clause prejudiced still further the interests of non-aggressive nations since all too frequently they had at their disposal neither sufficient cash to pay for purchases of war materials nor enough ships of their own to transport them. Thus, in the summer of 1937 the Neutrality Act was applied to China which fell victim to Japanese aggression.

In the spring of 1939, on a State Department initiative, it was suggested that Congress modify the neutrality legislation so as to facilitate sales of arms to Britain and France (on "cash-and-carry" terms) in the event of war. The House Foreign Relations Committee submitted a relevant bill to the House of Representatives, which voted it down, on June 30, 1939, by 200 votes to 188. On July 11, 1939, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee voted 12 to 11 against even submitting such a bill to the Senate (*Ibid.*, p. 468).

Roosevelt noted at a press conference on March 7, 1939, that the neutrality legislation had not contributed to the cause of peace (*The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt. 1939*, New York, 1941, p. 155). He was subsequently compelled to admit that "the arms embargo was actually having the effect of hastening the war in Europe by the encouragement which it gave to the aggressor nations." "I cannot say," he wrote, "that the repeal of these arms embargo provisions would by itself have stopped the war. I do believe, however, that, at least, it would have been a strong factor in preventing the outbreak from occurring as quickly as it did" (*Ibid.*, pp. XXXVI and XXXI). Roosevelt's admissions confirm that the policy of the US ruling circles objectively encouraged the aggressor nations to unleash a world war.

42. The Washington Conference on the limitation of naval armament and on Pacific and Far Eastern questions took place in the US capital from November 12, 1921, to February 6, 1922. It was attended by representatives of the USA, Britain, China, Japan, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium and Portugal.

The Conference, which was sponsored by the US Government, was convened to complete, in the aftermath of the First World War, the process of the redi-

vision of the world as it related to the Far East. The Washington Conference led to the conclusion of the following treaties:

1. The Four-Power Treaty (USA, Britain, Japan and France) on the joint protection by the contracting parties of their "rights" to insular possessions and dominions in the Pacific Ocean.

2. The Nine-Power Treaty (USA, Britain, France, Japan, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, Portugal and China), which formally declared the principle of respect for the sovereignty and the territorial and administrative integrity of China. It obliged the signatories to observe the principle of "equal opportunity" for the commerce and industry of all nations throughout the territory of China, and to refrain from taking advantage of the domestic situation in China to obtain special rights or privileges which could be harmful to the rights and interests of other states. The Nine-Power Treaty was in effect an agreement on the joint looting of China by the imperialist Powers. It was founded on the "open door" policy pursued by the USA, which hoped to use its economic power to oust its competitors from China.

3. The Five-Power Treaty (USA, Britain, Japan, France and Italy), which limited the naval armaments of the USA, Britain, Japan, France and Italy (in a ratio of 5:5:3:1.75:1.75). Limits were also laid down for the tonnage of battle ships and aircraft carriers and for their armament.

The decisions of the Washington Conference became one of the cornerstones of the Versailles-Washington system of post-war international relations.

43. The Chargé d'Affaires of the USSR in Japan, Smetanin, reported the following in a letter to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, dated January 3, 1939: "On the very next day after the announcement of the prolongation of the Soviet-Polish Pact of Non-Aggression, the Polish Ambassador in this country, Count Romer, called on Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Sawada and told him that 'the newly prolonged Polish-Soviet Pact of Non-Aggression is in no way aimed at harming friendly relations between Poland and Japan'" (Soviet Foreign Policy Archives).
44. A reference to the visit of Chamberlain and Halifax to Rome for talks with Mussolini, which took place from January 11 to 14, 1939. In summarizing the results of Chamberlain's visit to Rome, the Soviet Ambassador in Italy, Shtein, wrote that the basic aim of both Chamberlain and Bonnet was to make sure that the aggression of the Berlin-Rome Axis was directed eastwards. "To this end," he noted, "it is necessary to make concessions in the West, to secure the temporary satisfaction of Axis claims and thus to change the direction of its aggression. I feel that the main purpose of Chamberlain's visit was to sound Mussolini out about such a prospect" (Soviet Foreign Policy Archives).
45. On January 24, 1939, Bonnet said in a conversation with the German Ambassador in Paris that he had already expressed to Ribbentrop "his favourable attitude towards Franco's victory" (See Document No. 63) and "intended to resume diplomatic relations with Franco at the right moment." Referring to Franco-Italian relations, Bonnet emphasized that "he had done everything possible to improve these and to comply with wishes expressed from time to time by Mussolini (*Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945*, Series D, Vol. IV, pp. 491-492).
46. The Franco-Polish Treaty of Alliance was signed in Paris on February 12, 1921. Under it, if France and /or Poland fell victim to an unprovoked attack, the two Governments were to devise measures for the joint defence of their countries. The Treaty was concluded to ensure the stability of the political situation in Europe established on the basis of the Versailles system of peace treaties and, notably, to guarantee the security of French and Polish frontiers. It was the first in a series of political and military treaties concluded by France with several countries of Eastern Europe (see Note 16) all of which served to formalize the dominant position of France in Europe. In the 1920s the Franco-Polish Treaty also served as an instrument in the anti-Soviet policy pursued by the two states.

47. A reference to the German-Polish Declaration of Non-Aggression signed on January 26, 1934 (see Note 22).
48. In November 1938 the Japanese Government approached the Soviet Government with a proposal to begin talks to revise the Soviet-Japanese Fisheries Convention of 1928 and conclude a new convention on the basis of a 1936 Japanese draft whose terms were less advantageous to the USSR than those of the existing Convention. The Japanese Government attempted to justify its demands by references to the Portsmouth Treaty which had been imposed on tsarist Russia in 1905.

On November 28, 1938, the People's Commissar handed to the Japanese Ambassador the Soviet Government's official reply to the Japanese proposal to conclude a new fisheries convention. It pointed out that Article XI of the Portsmouth Treaty did not involve the USSR in any obligations in respect of either the number of fishing lots to be leased to Japanese nationals or the terms of the leasing of these lots, and that both matters could be settled only through an amicable agreement between the two Sides.

At the same time the People's Commissar drew attention to Japanese violations of the Portsmouth Treaty such as the occupation by Japan of Northeastern China where she was maintaining an enormous army, the building of fortifications by Japan on Sakhalin Island and her obstruction of the passage of Soviet ships through the Strait of La Perouse. "The situation cannot be regarded as tolerable," said M. M. Litvinov, "when the Japanese Government, while failing to fulfil its own obligations to the USSR, should insist that the latter not only meet its own obligations but also satisfy Japanese demands that go far beyond the limits of those obligations." He stated in conclusion that the Soviet Government would agree to begin talks for a new fisheries convention only after the Japanese Government had met its undertaking to guarantee payments for the Chinese Eastern Railway. Until that was done the Soviet Government would agree only to conclude a provisional fisheries agreement valid for one year. Simultaneously the Soviet Union announced its decision to withdraw, for strategical considerations, about 40 fishing lots that had previously been leased to Japanese nationals (*Izvestia*, December 8, 1938).

On December 13, 1938, the two Sides began discussing the terms of the provisional agreement. During the talks the Japanese bourgeois press launched a campaign against the Soviet Union, accusing it of "violating the rights" of Japan. Open threats were made against the USSR. In February and March 1939 the talks on the conclusion of a fisheries agreement reached the most critical stage. On February 14, 1939, the Lower House of the Japanese Parliament passed a resolution obliging the Government to take measures to protect the interests of Japan. Japanese diplomats made no secret of the likelihood of a military conflict between the USSR and Japan and began sounding out their possible allies (see Document No. 147).

The Soviet Government resolutely rejected the Japanese claims and declared that the USSR would regard an attempt to engage in "free fishing" in Soviet waters as an attack on the Soviet Union, with all the ensuing consequences. The firm and resolute stand taken by the Soviet Union forced the Japanese ruling circles to renounce their threats and agree to sign, on April 2, 1939, a protocol prolonging the fisheries Convention for one year on the terms proposed by the Soviet Government.

49. On November 30, 1938 the Italian Parliament began a foreign policy debate. When Foreign Minister Ciano in his speech referred to the "natural strivings" of Italy, a group of fascist Members of Parliament and a crowd of Roman fascists assembled outside the building began shouting, "Tunis! Corsica! Savoy!" The French Ambassador who had been present at the meeting left the Parliament. These territorial demands against France were promptly caught up and backed by the Italian press. In December 1938 Italy denounced her agreement with France of January 7, 1935 (see Note 28). Italy's demands against France reflected the aggressive plans of the fascist Government of Mussolini and further aggravated Franco-Italian imperialist contradictions. In reply to Italy's

territorial demands French Prime Minister Daladier paid a special visit to Corsica and Tunis in early January 1939. The French Government, which had signed a Declaration of Non-Aggression with Nazi Germany on December 6, 1938 (see Document No. 64), believed itself to be in a sufficiently strong position and refused to make concessions to fascist Italy.

50. In July 1938 the British Government, in agreement with the French Government, sent a Mission to Prague headed by Viscount Runciman, the Lord President of the Council, which was to "mediate" between the Czechoslovak Government and the fascist so-called Sudeten German Party, led by Henlein, Hitler's agent in Czechoslovakia. Under British and French pressure the Benes Government accepted the Runciman Mission.

The activities of the Runciman Mission aggravated the situation still further by internationalizing the so-called "Sudeten problem" which was a Czechoslovak domestic issue. Viscount Runciman openly interfered in Czechoslovakia's internal affairs, seeking to get the Czechoslovak Government to meet Nazi demands. In dispatching the Runciman Mission, the British Government intended to shift the blame for its failure onto Czechoslovakia so as to have an excuse for refusing to render assistance to Czechoslovakia against German aggression. "If Lord Runciman, despite all his efforts, had failed to achieve agreement," wrote the British Ambassador in Berlin, Henderson, "it would have become clear that the blame for the failure would have fallen on the Czechs and that the Germans would have been right to assert that due to the intractability of the Czechs the only way to achieve success was through the use of force" (*Documents and Materials Relating to the Eve of the Second World War*, Vol. I, p. 173).

On September 16, 1938, Runciman returned to London. In his report to the British Government he strongly recommended the detachment of the Sudetenland from Czechoslovakia and the transfer of these traditionally Czech lands to Nazi Germany.

51. After the Munich collusion the French Government continued its policy of rapprochement with Nazi Germany which ran counter to French national interests. On October 13, 1938, the French Ambassador in Berlin, François-Poncet, in a conversation with the State Secretary of the German Foreign Ministry, Weizsaecker, tried to sound out the possibility of a visit to Paris by German Foreign Minister Ribbentrop. In this connection he suggested the conclusion between Germany and France of a non-aggression pact, consultative agreement and a currency agreement (*Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945*, Series D, Vol. IV, pp. 436-437). The Government of Nazi Germany was not interested in concluding such far-reaching agreements with France and went no further than signing a Franco-German declaration similar in spirit to the Anglo-German Declaration of September 30, 1938 (See Document No. 2).

The Franco-German Declaration was a political agreement which was very much like a non-aggression pact and which in effect rendered meaningless the Soviet-French Treaty of Mutual Assistance of 1935 (See Note 7). Noël, the then French Ambassador in Poland, later recalled that Bonnet told him in November 1938 of his intention "to denounce wholly and fully the agreements France had concluded in the East. Along with the Franco-Polish agreements he undoubtedly meant the Franco-Soviet Pact of Mutual Assistance as well" (*Les événements survenus en France de 1933 à 1945*, Vol. IV, p. 855).

According to the calculations of the French ruling circles the Declaration signed as a result of the talks between Bonnet and Ribbentrop was to guarantee the security of France while giving Germany a free hand in Eastern Europe. "Bonnet himself declared in a circular minute to all Ambassadors," wrote Paul Reynaud later, "that from these negotiations he had formed the impression that German policy would be aimed at a struggle with Bolshevism. The Reich had made known its desire for expansion in an eastern direction..." (P. Reynaud, *La France a sauvé l'Europe*, Vol. I, Paris, 1947, p. 575).

The signing of this Declaration by the French Government amounted to an encouragement of Nazi Germany's aggressive plans, for this French move,

Noël observed, strengthened in the minds of Ribbentrop and Hitler "the view that nothing more would stop Germany's movement to the East and that Poland, on the very day she was attacked, would, in turn, be abandoned by France, as Czechoslovakia had been abandoned" (*Les événements survenus en France de 1933 à 1945*, Vol. IV, p. 856).

Subsequent developments proved how nearsighted was the policy of the French Government at the time.

52. After the conclusion of his talks with Ribbentrop, which were held in Paris from December 6 to 8, 1938, Bonnet familiarized Soviet Ambassador Surits with their results. On the same day the Ambassador sent a telegram on the subject to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs. A comparison of the information which Bonnet gave the Ambassador with the German memorandum of Bonnet's conversation with Ribbentrop (see Document No. 63) shows that the French Minister tried to misinform the Government of the Soviet Union, which was an ally of France. Thus, he made no mention whatsoever of Ribbentrop's persistent statements to the effect that Germany regarded Eastern Europe as "an area of her interests," to which Bonnet made absolutely no objections. Bonnet naturally also failed to mention the fact that Ribbentrop had reviled the Soviet-French Treaty, while Bonnet had disassociated himself from the Treaty and placed the responsibility for its conclusion upon others. Bonnet had attempted to belittle its significance and had assured Ribbentrop that the French Government was "absolutely hostile to Bolshevism."

53. Having taken the path of preparing for a war to re-make the map of the world, the aggressor Powers—Germany, Italy and Japan—believed it necessary to turn the Anti-Comintern Pact (see Note 24) into a direct military alliance of the three Powers. From early 1938 Nazi Germany began taking a particular interest in this matter since she was actively preparing to seize Austria and then Czechoslovakia.

Several facts relating to the history of the preparations for the Three-Power Pact were reported by the Soviet military intelligence officer in Japan, R. Sorge, in his telegram of September 3, 1938. Oshima, the Japanese Military Attaché in Berlin, he wrote, had telegraphed to War Minister Itagaki that "Ribbentrop, after concerting the matter with the Italians, made a proposal to him for the conclusion of a tripartite political and military alliance in view of the tense situation in Europe. The Japanese General Staff and Prime Minister Konoye are none too keen to take it up, fearful of being entangled in European affairs. They would agree only if the alliance was directed against the USSR. Nonetheless both of them are almost inclined to accept."

During the Munich Conference Ribbentrop handed to Italian Foreign Minister Ciano the draft of a triple pact between Germany, Italy and Japan (M. Toscano, *Le Origini del patto d'acciaio*, Firenze, 1948, pp. 19-20).

Towards the end of October 1938 Ribbentrop went to Rome for talks with Italian Government officials about the conclusion of the pact. On January 2, 1939, Ciano informed Ribbentrop that Italy agreed to sign the pact but said that it was desirable to present it as a "peace pact" (*Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945*, Series D, Vol. IV, p. 545).

Under various pretexts, the Japanese Government kept delaying its reply to the triple pact proposal. This delay reflected the internal political struggle in Japan over the future direction of Japanese aggression (see Document No. 100). On March 12, 1939, R. Sorge reported that in the opinion of the German Ambassador to Japan, Ott, "the Japanese are ready at any moment to sign a pact directed solely against the USSR". In April 1939 the Japanese Government informed the Governments of Germany and Italy that it agreed to sign a pact directed against the USSR but did not believe it possible to conclude a pact directed simultaneously also against Britain, France and the USA (M. Toscano, *Le Origini del patto d'acciaio*, pp. 104, 125).

The Japanese attitude caused resentment among the ruling circles of Germany and Italy. The Governments of those countries which were out to recarve the world, wanted to conclude a tripartite alliance directed not only against

the USSR, but also against Britain, France and the USA. Hitler and Mussolini rejected the Japanese proposals to limit the sphere of the treaty.

In view of Japan's attitude Germany and Italy signed on May 22, 1939, a bilateral German-Italian Pact of military alliance ("The Pact of Steel") (*Documents on German Foreign Policy. 1918-1945*, Series D, Vol. VI, pp. 561-564).

The Japanese Government finally decided, on September 4, 1940, to sign the three-power pact. The defeat of France and the weakening of British positions in the Far East prompted Japan to step up her aggressive actions. The Tripartite Pact, signed on September 27, 1940, said that "Japan recognizes and respects the leadership of Germany and Italy in the establishment of a new order in Europe," while "Germany and Italy recognize and respect the leadership of Japan in the establishment of a new order in the Greater East Asia". The members of the pact undertook "to assist one another with all political, economic and military means" in the event of either of them being at war with a Power not involved in the European war or in the Sino-Japanese conflict (*Documents on German Foreign Policy. 1918-1945*, Series D, Vol. XI, pp. 204-205).

The main object of the Tripartite Pact was to co-ordinate the actions of Germany, Italy and Japan with a view to establishing world domination.

54. On July 14, 1937, the British Government submitted to the Non-Intervention Committee a plan calling for modification of the system of controls at the Spanish borders (retention of controls at the land frontiers, abolition of naval patrolling and its replacement by a system of observers at Spanish ports); the withdrawal of foreign troops and volunteers from Spain; and the granting to Franco of belligerent rights as soon as the Non-Intervention Committee ruled that "substantial progress" had been made in withdrawing foreign combatants.

The British plan was very much in line with the interests of the fascist powers. It substantially lessened the naval control which was not to the liking of Germany and Italy, and it equated the legitimate Government of Spain with the fascist rebels by granting the latter belligerent rights which, moreover, entitled them to establish a naval blockade of Republican Spain. The representatives of the fascist states of Germany and Italy in the Non-Intervention Committee welcomed the plan.

The Soviet Government managed to introduce several substantial amendments into the British plan. On July 5, 1938, the Non-Intervention Committee adopted the plan.

55. In a Note dated December 10, 1938, the German Ambassador in London, Dirksen, notified Halifax of Germany's intention to avail herself of the terms of the Anglo-German Naval Agreement (see Note 3) and to increase the tonnage of the German submarine fleet to the level of the tonnage of Britain's submarine fleet. At the same time the Note said that the German Government had decided to modify the tonnage and the calibre of the guns of the heavy cruisers which were then under construction (*Documents on British Foreign Policy. 1919-1939*, Third Series, Vol. III, pp. 422-423).
56. A reference to President Roosevelt's message to the US Congress of January 4, 1939 in which he wrote of the arms race which was being intensified throughout the world and of the mounting danger of new acts of aggression. He pointed out that "no nation can be safe in its will to peace so long as any other powerful nation refuses to settle its grievances at the council table". Roosevelt urged Congress to increase US military appropriations (*The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt. 1939*, pp. 2-3).
57. The Brussels Conference was held from November 3 to 24, 1937. It was convened on the initiative of the League of Nations to enable the Parties to the Nine-Power Treaty of Washington (see Note 42) and other states concerned to discuss the question of restoring peace in the Far East which had been violated as a result of the Japanese attack on China in July 1937. The Brussels

Conference was attended by 18 nations, including the USSR. Japan refused to send her representatives to the Conference. On November 15, 1937, the Chinese delegation proposed that the Conference apply economic sanctions against Japan in accordance with the Covenant of the League of Nations. The Soviet Union vigorously supported the Chinese proposal. Britain and the USA, which dominated the Conference, had no intention of applying any measures of coercion to Japan. Their objective was not to curb the Japanese aggressors but to strike imperialistic bargains with them, to make certain concessions to them, mainly at the expense of China, so as to preserve their own economic positions in China.

Owing to the position of connivance at aggression taken by the Western Powers, the Brussels Conference passed a completely unbinding resolution which mentioned the fact that Japan had violated the Nine-Power Treaty of Washington and expressed the hope that in the future it would be possible to find ways to restore peace in the Far East. The Brussels Conference thereupon adjourned pending "more favourable conditions," but it was never reconvened. However, in subsequent years Britain, France and the USA continued to pursue a policy of appeasing the Japanese aggressors, the policy of a "Far Eastern Munich" (see Notes 128, 134).

58. On January 6, 1939, while he was on a visit to Germany, Polish Foreign Minister Beck also had a meeting with Ribbentrop in Munich. During this meeting, Beck said that Poland wanted "to live in friendly and neighbourly relations with Germany and to strengthen these relations". He assured Ribbentrop that Poland would do everything to co-operate with the Germans against the Comintern but she did not consider it timely to join the Anti-Comintern Pact. Replying to Ribbentrop's question whether the Polish Government had given up Marshal Pilsudski's aspirations in respect of the Ukraine, Beck said that the Poles "had even been in Kiev, and that these aspirations were doubtless still alive today" (*Documents on German Foreign Policy. 1918-1945, Series D, Vol. V, pp. 159-161*).

59. On January 17, 1939 the Chinese representative, Wellington Koo, informed Surits, the Soviet representative at the session of the League of Nations Council of the proposals which the Chinese Delegation intended to submit to the forthcoming session. On January 20, Wellington Koo set out the proposals at a plenary meeting of the Council. They envisaged an embargo on the sale to Japan of aircraft, raw materials for the war industry and fuel; a boycott of Japanese goods (especially articles made of silk and cotton fabrics); the rendering of economic and financial aid to China for the development of her Southwestern provinces, and the shipment and transit to China of military materials on easy terms.

On January 20, 1939, after a debate, the Council of the League of Nations, which was dominated by Britain and France, passed one more routine resolution inviting "the Members of the League, particularly those directly concerned in the Far East, to examine... the proposals made in the statement of the representative of China before the Council on January 17th, 1939, for the taking of effective measures, especially measures of aid to China" (*Report on the Work of the League. 1938-39, Geneva, 1939, p. 10*).

60. On this subject R. Sorge reported additional information in his telegram of April 23, 1939, which read: "Ott says that the appointment of Koiso (as Japanese Minister of Communications) is of great significance in that the road is now open for him to become Prime Minister. He is strongly in favour of making peace with China; this he considers necessary before a war in Europe breaks out. Koiso has declared that he is planning to make peace with China and even with Chiang Kai-shek... He is emphasizing that the Japanese should strengthen their positions in North China only, and leave South and Central China more or less to the Chinese Government, and prepare for war against the USSR after strengthening Japanese positions in North China, Manchuria and Mongolia."

61. On October 20, 1921, Great Britain, Germany, Denmark, Italy, Latvia, Poland, Finland, France, Sweden and Estonia signed in Geneva a Convention for the Non-Fortification and Neutralization of the Aaland Islands. Under the Convention Finland undertook not to fortify the Aaland Islands or to establish military bases there. In time of war the Islands were to be regarded as neutral, but if the war should spread to the Baltic Sea, Finland would be entitled to defend the neutrality of the Aaland Islands. After it was approved by the Council of the League of Nations and ratified by all its participants the Aaland Convention entered into force on April 6, 1922.

The Soviet Government repeatedly protested the preparation of the Convention relating to the status of the Aaland Islands without its participation. On November 13, 1921, the Government of the RSFSR sent a Note to the signatory States protesting against the signing of the Convention without Soviet Russia's participation. In this connection the Soviet Government declared that the Convention "was unconditionally non-existent for Russia" (*Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. IV, Moscow, 1960, p. 495).

In January 1939 the Government of Finland, in concert with the Government of Sweden, sent a Note to all the other states that were signatories of the Convention of 1921, in which it raised the question of modifying Articles 6 and 7 of the Convention so as to enable the Governments of Finland and Sweden to fortify the Aaland Islands (*League of Nations. Official Journal*, May-June, 1939, pp. 284-285). On January 21, 1939, the Finnish Note on this question was sent also to the Soviet Union (the Aaland Convention could be modified only with the consent of the Council of the League of Nations, of which the USSR was a member).

In setting out its position on this matter, the Soviet Government proceeded from a desire to protect Soviet interests by making sure that the Aaland Islands should not become a source of military danger for the USSR (see Note 119).

62. On January 25, 1939, the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs received British Ambassador Seeds prior to the presentation of his Letters of Credence to the Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. During their conversation the Ambassador observed that friends of the USSR in Britain were accusing the British Government of cold-shouldering the Soviet Union. He had been instructed to do all in his power to dissipate any such impression. The British Government, the Ambassador said, would like to "know—and give favourable consideration to—the Soviet Government's views on international problems" (*Documents on British Foreign Policy. 1919-1939*, Third Series, Vol. IV, p. 25).

Referring to this statement by Seeds, the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs wrote on February 4, 1939 to the Soviet Ambassador to Britain that "no significance should be attached" to it. The People's Commissar noted that of course this would not prevent Chamberlain from using Seeds' statement "to gag" the Opposition, which was demanding genuine co-operation with the USSR. In London "they are at last beginning to realize how illusory are the hopes that Hitler's aggression will take an Eastern direction. This is what has prompted Bonnet to declare that the Franco-Soviet Pact is valid and it may also have prompted Chamberlain to make a public statement about the desirability of contact with us, and to accept the invitation to your reception. But 'Moscow does not believe in mere words'" (*Soviet Foreign Policy Archives*).

63. On January 29, 1939, the British Embassy in Paris sent the French Government an *aide mémoire* setting out the contents of a telegram from the British Foreign Secretary to the British Ambassadors in France and Belgium, dated January 28, 1939 (See Document No. 104).

64. On January 26, 1939 French Foreign Minister Bonnet presented a foreign policy report to the National Assembly. In it he reminded the "critics of the Munich Agreement" that on October 4, 1938, the National Assembly had expressed confidence in the Government by a majority of votes. Bonnet said that friendship with Britain was the cornerstone of French policy. He hailed the

Anglo-German and Franco-German Declarations (see Documents Nos. 2, 64) which he regarded as a first step towards fruitful co-operation with Germany in the future. Touching briefly upon relations with the Soviet Union, Bonnet mentioned the Treaty of Mutual Assistance between the two countries, observing that France remained loyal to the treaties she had concluded with the Soviet Union and other states of Eastern Europe. Bonnet also reaffirmed the French Government's policy of "non-intervention" on the Spanish question.

Ribbentrop's displeasure over Bonnet's speech was explained by the fact that earlier the French Government had repeatedly intimated to the Germans that after Munich it no longer attributed any real significance to its treaties with Poland and the USSR, recognizing Eastern Europe as a German "sphere of influence" (see Documents Nos. 63, 370).

65. A reference to the economic talks between the representatives of Germany and France in accordance with the understanding reached between German Foreign Minister Ribbentrop and French Foreign Minister Bonnet during their meeting in Paris in December 1938. The two Sides discussed practical measures to increase German exports to France and French exports to Germany, to encourage German trade with the French colonies, and to promote agreements between individual economic groups in the two countries, travel between the two countries for various groups of people and economic co-operation between Germany and France in other countries (*Documents on German Foreign Policy. 1918-1945*, Series D, Vol. IV, pp. 477-481).

66. On January 12, 1939, Hungarian Foreign Minister Csaky announced his Government's decision to join the Anti-Comintern Pact (see Note 24). From January 16 to 18, 1939, Csaky paid a visit to Germany (see Document No. 94), which resulted in a considerable increase of the influence of Nazi Germany on Hungary's domestic and foreign policies. Addressing Parliament on February 22, 1939, the Hungarian Prime Minister, Count Teleki, declared that in her policies Hungary relied first and foremost on the Axis countries. By her accession to the Anti-Comintern Pact, he said, Hungary wished to prove that she was in agreement with the objectives of those countries.

The protocol of Hungary's accession to the Anti-Comintern Pact was signed in Budapest on February 24, 1939.

67. In his speech before the Reichstag on January 30, 1939, Hitler attempted to justify "the necessity of living space for the Germans". In particular he demanded the return to Germany of her former colonies. Concerning his policy towards Germany's allies, he declared that any war, whatever the causes for its outbreak, would place Germany on the side of fascist Italy. This was an expression of Hitler's political support for Italy's aggressive designs.

68. On January 24, 1939 Foreign Secretary Halifax confidentially informed the US President that Hitler was "considering an attack on the Western Powers as a preliminary to subsequent action in the East". Referring to the deterioration of German-Dutch relations, Halifax wrote that the German occupation of Holland and the Dutch coast would give Hitler an opportunity to paralyze France and dictate his terms to Britain (*Documents on British Foreign Policy. 1919-1939*, Third Series, Vol. IV, p. 4).

In a telegram to the British Ambassador in Washington dated January 28, 1939, Halifax set out the contents of the Address made by the British Government to the Governments of France and Belgium on this matter (see Document No. 104). He emphasized that "the strategical importance of Holland and her colonies is so great that in the view of His Majesty's Government a German attack on Holland must be regarded as a direct threat to the security of the Western Powers" (*Documents on British Foreign Policy. 1919-1939*, Third Series, Vol. IV, p. 40).

69. In February 1939 Count de Brinon, the Editor-in-Chief of the French newspaper *l'Information* and vice-president of the France-Germany society, travelled

to Berlin where he had a meeting with Ribbentrop. In the course of their conversation de Brinon broached the question of a threat of war in Europe, referring in particular to the anti-French policy of Italy. De Brinon mentioned the possibility of German mediation in the Franco-Italian dispute, but Ribbentrop did not follow this up (*Documents on German Foreign Policy. 1918-1945, Series D, Vol. IV, p. 495*).

70. In late November 1938 King Carol II of Rumania paid an unofficial visit to Germany on his way home from Britain and France. On November 24 he had a secret meeting with Hitler. The King of Rumania mentioned the existence of "good relations with the German Reich" and declared that Rumania desired to "maintain and consolidate" those relations and, in particular, to develop commercial and economic ties with Germany. In the course of the conversation the King repeatedly emphasized the anti-Soviet nature of Rumania's foreign policy (*Documents on German Foreign Policy. 1918-1945, Series D, Vol. V, p. 339*).

On November 26, 1938 the King of Rumania met with Goering in Leipzig. Touching upon European affairs, the King stated that the Polish-Rumanian alliance (see Note 99) was "directed exclusively against the East". He expressed readiness "to maintain systematic co-operation for the development of economic relations" between Rumania and Germany and expressed himself in favour of elaborating a long-term plan (for five-ten years) to develop trade between the two countries (*Ibid.*, pp. 345-347).

The visit of Carol II to Nazi Germany showed that after Munich the Rumanian ruling circles decided still further to subordinate their economy, and to a considerable extent also the policies of their country to the interests of the fascist Reich.

Owing to the suppression in Rumania, in late November 1938, of an attempted uprising by the pro-Hitler "Iron Guard" and the temporary deterioration of German-Rumanian relations that followed it, the economic talks between the two countries did not begin until February 1939. On the German side the talks were conducted by H. Wohlthat, a high-ranking official in the Department of the Four-Year Plan headed by Goering. The talks led to the signing on March 23, 1939, of a treaty "on the strengthening of economic ties between Rumania and Germany" (see Note 93).

71. On February 10, 1939 Japan seized the Chinese Island of Hainan. This worsened the situation of China and dealt a serious blow at the positions of Britain, France and the USA in the Far East. However, the Governments of those countries went no further than to make *démarches* to the Japanese Government asking for an explanation.

Thus, on February 17, 1939 the US Ambassador in Tokyo, Grew, acting on the instructions of the State Department, called on the Japanese Foreign Ministry and made an oral statement to the effect that the US Government "would be glad to be informed as to the intentions of the Japanese Government in connection with the occupation of Hainan Island".

Replying to Grew, Japanese Foreign Minister Arita stated that "the purpose of the occupation of Hainan Island is to strengthen the blockade of the South China coast and to hasten the suppression of the Chiang Kai-shek regime". Arita repeated former statements by the Japanese Government disclaiming Japanese territorial ambitions in China, and added that the occupation "will not go beyond military necessity" (*Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States. Japan, 1931-1941, Vol. I, p. 831*).

These "*démarches*" by the USA, Britain and France merely provided Japan with new evidence that she could continue her aggressive policy with impunity. This attitude of the Western Powers was a clear example of the policy of connivance at aggression which they pursued in the Far East.

72. On December 22, 1930, Belgium, Denmark, Holland, Norway and Sweden signed in Oslo a convention under which they undertook not to raise their customs tariffs without prior consultations with one another. In 1932 the conven-

tion was signed by Finland, and in 1937 by Luxemburg. These countries came to be known as the "Oslo Group".

73. On the night of March 11 and in the early morning of March 12, 1939, German troops entered the territory of Austria. With the connivance of the Governments of the Western Powers the so-called Anschluss of Austria was thus effected.

The Soviet Union vigorously condemned the Nazi aggression against Austria. In a statement to the press on March 17, 1938, the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR, having condemned the forcible deprivation of the Austrian people of their political, economic and cultural independence, pointed out that "the present international situation confronts all peace-loving States and particularly the Great Powers with the question of their responsibility for the further destinies of the peoples of Europe, and not only Europe". The Soviet Union, he stated, "is prepared to participate in collective actions which would be decided on together with it and which would have the aim of checking further aggression and eliminating the heightened danger of a new world carnage". The Soviet Government proposed "immediate discussions with other Powers, either within the League of Nations or outside it, of practical measures made necessary by the circumstances". The People's Commissar urged the Great Powers to take "a firm and unequivocal stand in respect of the problem of the collective preservation of the world" (*Izvestia*, March 18, 1938).

On the same day the text of the statement was communicated to the Governments of Britain, France, the USA and Czechoslovakia. Britain and France rejected the Soviet proposal. In its reply of March 24, the British Government said that it would not enter into any negotiations with the Soviet Union on the question of creating a collective front against the fascist aggressors, and declared that "concerted action against aggression would not necessarily, in the view of His Majesty's Government, have such a favourable effect upon the prospects of European peace" (*Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939*, Third Series, Vol. I, p. 101).

The US Government did not answer the Soviet proposal. US Secretary of State Hull recalled the incident in his memoirs: "For several weeks we debated at the State Department whether to reply to this statement. I decided, however, that, in view of the fact that no formal reply was called for, and that our response, under the limitations of our policy against entanglements, must be negative and might therefore discourage Russia, we would not send an answer" (C. Hull, *The Memoirs*, Vol. I, New York, 1948, pp. 658-659).

74. In the second half of May 1938 Germany began pulling her forces up to the frontiers of Czechoslovakia, leaving no doubts as to her aggressive intentions. This gave rise to the so-called May crisis. The Czechoslovak Government announced a partial mobilization. The people of Czechoslovakia were fully determined to wage an armed resistance against Germany. Fearful lest an armed conflict broke out, involving France by virtue of her treaty with Czechoslovakia, and then England as well, the British Government thought it best to restrain Germany from taking armed action. However, it intimated at the same time that it would help in achieving the "peaceful" satisfaction of German demands in respect of Czechoslovakia.

Thus, on May 21, 1938, Halifax instructed the British Ambassador in Berlin, Henderson, to tell the German Government that if a conflict should arise, "the German Government must be well aware of the dangers which such a development would involve", as France would be compelled to intervene while the British Government "could not guarantee that they would not be forced by circumstances to become involved also". At the same time the statement said that the British Government would do its utmost to promote a peaceful solution of the question and would use to these ends all its influence with the Czechoslovak Government (*Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939*, Third Series, Vol. I, p. 332).

On the very next day, May 22, Halifax instructed the British Minister in Prague, Newton, to call the attention of the Czechoslovak Government to the

need to make every effort to "keep the way open for peaceful solution" (*Ibid.*, p. 340).

At the same time the British Government was bringing pressure to bear on France in order to make her avoid meeting her allied obligations to Czechoslovakia. On May 22, Halifax instructed the British Ambassador in Paris, Phipps, to inform the French Government of the British démarche in Berlin. "If, however," Halifax wrote, "the French Government were to assume that His Majesty's Government would at once take joint military action with them to preserve Czechoslovakia against German aggression, it is only fair to warn them that our statements do not warrant any such assumption" (*Ibid.*, p. 347). The British were thus plainly saying that they had no intention of fighting over Czechoslovakia. Phipps was also instructed to tell the French Government that the British Government was hoping that without consulting Britain the French Government would take no action which "might render the situation more acute or have the result of exposing them to German attack" (*Ibid.*, p. 347).

Contrary to his statement made at a press conference on May 21, to the effect that France would meet her treaty obligations in the event of a German attack on Czechoslovakia, Bonnet replied to Phipps on May 22 that he "thoroughly understood" the position of the British Government. He assured Phipps that the French Government "would not dream of taking any action... without ample consultation with His Majesty's Government".

"M. Bonnet repeated to me," Phipps wrote to Halifax, "that he would readily put any pressure on Czechoslovak Government that you might think at any moment desirable in order to ensure a peaceful solution of Sudeten question... Moreover, he said, if Czechoslovakia were really unreasonable the French Government might well declare that France considered herself released from her bond. M. Bonnet remarked that all that the French Government desired was not to be placed before the dreadful alternative of breaking their pledge or of beginning another world war" (*Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939, Third Series, Vol. I, p. 357*).

It will thus be seen that already during the May crisis Britain and France had reached what amounted to an understanding that they would not render Czechoslovakia assistance against German aggression. The only concern of the British and French Governments was how to make their betrayal of Czechoslovakia appear plausible. In reality, they wanted to see that Nazi Germany's demands were met in a "peaceful" manner so that the question of France fulfilling her treaty obligations to Czechoslovakia should not arise at all. This "peaceful solution", or rather this collusion of the ruling circles of the four Powers—Germany, Britain, France and Italy—aimed at dismembering Czechoslovakia, was brought about on September 29-30, 1938, in Munich (See Document No. 1 and Note 1).

75. In the second half of October 1938, soon after the signing of the Munich Agreement, representatives of the British ruling circles began sounding out the possibility of reaching an agreement with Germany on economic matters, regarding it as a most important step towards the establishment of political co-operation between the two countries. On October 17-18, 1938, a German economic delegation led by Rüter held secret unofficial talks with British Government officials in London, on a British initiative, on the possibility of increasing German exports to British colonies. During a conversation on October 18, 1938, the Chief Economic Adviser to the British Government, Leith-Ross, suggested broader co-operation between the four European Powers (Britain, Germany, France and Italy) on the basis of the Van Zeeland Plan (see Note 14) (*Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945, Series D, Vol. IV, pp. 315-317*).

In a conversation with Wienke, a representative of the Reichsbank, on November 6, 1938, the head of the Economic Department of the Foreign Office, Ashton-Gwatkin, suggested that they consider the possibility of Britain granting larger credits to Germany and of the German and British industries

concluding an agreement on prices and markets, notably a coal agreement (*Ibid.*, pp. 323-324).

In mid-December 1938 the President of the Reichsbank, Schacht, paid a visit to the Governor of the Bank of England, Norman. In his conversations with Stanley, the President of the Board of Trade, Leith-Ross and other British economic experts, Schacht found out that his partners were prepared to initiate economic talks with Germany about extending trade, restoring the freedom of foreign exchange and so forth (*Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945, Series D, Vol. IV, p. 351*).

Simultaneously talks began in London between the Rhine-Westphalia Coal Syndicate and the Mining Association of Great Britain. They led to the signing on January 28, 1939, of an agreement on the delimitation of spheres of interests and on uniform prices of coal on the markets of third countries (*Ibid.*, pp. 394-395). Speaking in Hull on February 3, 1939, British Foreign Secretary Halifax welcomed the establishment of this international coal cartel as "a very practical contribution to co-operation between the two countries and a hopeful sign for the future" (*Speeches on Foreign Policy by Viscount Halifax, London, 1940, p. 223*). In a speech on February 22, 1939, Chamberlain also noted that a rapprochement between Britain and Germany in the field of trade would be the best and quickest way to achieve mutual understanding between the two countries.

On March 15-16, 1939, a conference was held in Dusseldorf attended by representatives of the Federation of British Industries and of the Alliance of German Industry. During this meeting of the industrialists of the two countries an agreement was concluded which in effect constituted a cartel treaty on the division of world markets between British and German monopolies. Article 4 of the agreement said that "constructive co-operation" should take the place of destructive competition between Britain and Germany. To this end provision was made for a joint policy of establishing cartels in several branches of industry, fixing prices and securing currency receipts. The agreement envisaged the use of government machinery to assist German and British industrialists in their competition with the industries of other countries. The participants in the agreement expressed satisfaction with the fact that 10 industrial groups in the two countries had already begun talks on economic co-operation, while another 50 industrial groups had, in principle, expressed their readiness to begin such talks. The Dusseldorf Conference set up a standing committee which was to meet regularly to supervise the implementation of the measures agreed upon. The Federation of British Industries invited the German members of the newly-established standing committee to visit Britain in June 1939 (*Foreign Relations of the United States, 1939, Vol. I, pp. 77-78*).

On February 21, 1939, the British press announced the forthcoming visit to Berlin of the President of the Board of Trade, Stanley, and the Parliamentary Secretary of the Department of Overseas Trade, Hudson. However, the Nazi seizure of Czechoslovakia, which aroused public indignation in Britain, compelled the Government to suspend talks with Nazi Germany for the time being. On March 15, 1939, Halifax announced that the visit of Stanley and Hudson to Berlin had been postponed.

This showed how illusory were the hopes of the British ruling circles that through economic co-operation, including the negotiation of cartel agreements, the extension of credits and so forth, they could secure political collusion with the Nazi aggressors.

In the summer of 1939 the ruling circles of Britain made new attempts to reach agreement with the Hitlerites (see Documents Nos. 379, 383, 396).

76. Discussions about joint military action by Germany and Estonia against the Soviet Union in the event of a Soviet-German war were started in 1938. In a dispatch to Berlin dated July 5, 1938, the German Minister in Estonia, Frohwein, reported his conversation with the Chief of Staff of the Estonian Army, Reek, and wrote that in case of a war it would be very important for Estonia that Germany should exercise control over the Baltic Sea. "General Reek confirmed this," Frohwein wrote, "and then stated that Estonia could also contri-

bute something in this connection. For instance, the Gulf of Finland could quite easily be mined against Soviet Russian warships without attracting attention and there were also other possibilities" (*Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945*, Series D, Vol. V, p. 461).

77. The so-called Godesberg Programme was presented by Hitler to Chamberlain on September 22, 1938, at Bad-Godesberg. In it Hitler set forth his categorical demands for the immediate transfer to Nazi Germany of several regions of Czechoslovakia.

At Bad-Godesberg Hitler rejected all forms of control by Britain and France over the transfer to Germany of German-speaking districts of Czechoslovakia, refused to carry out a preliminary plebiscite and opposed the granting of international guarantees to Czechoslovakia (*Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945*, Series D, Vol. II, pp. 870-879).

Hitler's demands constituted such an overt act of aggression that Chamberlain was unable to obtain the consent of the Czechoslovak and French Governments to their being met.

Thus, in drafting the text of the Munich Agreement, the British and French did their best to give Nazi Germany's seizure of the Sudetenland a semblance of legality. The Munich Agreement, as distinct from the Godesberg Programme, put off for several days the dates of the occupation, provided for the setting up of a quadrilateral commission to establish the final boundary lines and to supervise the plebiscite which was to be carried out in some occupied regions. The Munich Agreement also envisaged future four-Power guarantees for Czechoslovakia.

As subsequent events showed, Hitler had no intention of meeting these conditions of the Munich Agreement, which to some extent restricted his Godesberg Programme, while the Governments of Britain and France continued their policy of connivance at aggression. Therefore the quadrilateral commission in Berlin was unable to carry out the tasks it had been charged with, and in late 1938 it was abolished. Czechoslovakia never received any international guarantees of her new frontiers.

78. Taking advantage of the absence from the country of King Carol II who was on a visit to several foreign countries in the autumn of 1938, the pro-Hitler organization, the Iron Guard, made an attempt to organize an uprising. On his return to Bucharest the King arrested the leaders of the Iron Guard. On November 30, the Rumanian press reported that the leader of the Iron Guard, Codreanu, and 13 of his accomplices had been killed "while attempting to escape".

By killing Codreanu and his accomplices the King tried to strengthen his position and to rid himself of a dangerous competitor who was out to seize power. The rout of the Iron Guard provoked a sharp reaction in the German press and among German Government officials. The German press mounted a campaign against the Rumanian King. Goering declared that the killing of Codreanu had buried the possibility of a political agreement with Rumania. The German Minister was recalled from Bucharest.

The worsening of relations with Rumania was used by the Nazis to make Rumania sign a trade agreement for 1939 which was more to the advantage for Germany. The treaty was signed on December 10, 1938. German-Rumanian relations again began to improve. The Deputy Head of the Economic Policy Department of the German Foreign Ministry, Clodius, wrote on December 13, 1938, that "the political tension manifesting itself between Germany and Rumania after the murder of Codreanu rather helped than hindered the negotiations, because the Rumanian Government was evidently much concerned about running into differences with Germany in the economic field, too." (*Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945*, Series D, Vol. V, pp. 354-355).

79. The report of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik) to the 18th Party Congress on March 10, 1939, (the report was presented by J. V. Stalin) gave a detailed analysis of the foreign policy of Britain and

France. The report pointed out that Italy, Germany and Japan were infringing the interests of other states by their aggressive actions, while the Governments of Britain, France and the USA were making concession after concession to the aggressors. The main reason for these concessions was that the Governments of these countries refused to adopt a policy of collective security and had taken, instead, a position of non-intervention. The report emphasized that the policy of non-intervention meant connivance at aggression, that it was motivated by a desire not to hinder the aggressors, "not to hinder, say, Japan from becoming involved in a war with China or, better still, with the Soviet Union; not to hinder, say, Germany from becoming immersed in European affairs and getting involved in a war with the Soviet Union, to let all the belligerents sink deep into the quagmire of war, to spur them on in this on the sly, to let them weaken and exhaust one another and then, when they are sufficiently weakened, to come forward—of course, 'in the interests of peace'—with fresh forces, and dictate their terms to the weakened belligerents.

"A nice and easy way of doing things!"

"...Take Germany. They have ceded Austria to Germany despite the existence of an obligation to defend her independence; they have ceded the Sudeten region, they have abandoned Czechoslovakia to the mercy of fate, violating all and every obligation; and then they have started to lie in the press about the 'weakness of the Russian army'... , prodding the Germans further to the East, promising them easy prey and saying over and over again: you only have to start a war with the Bolsheviks and all will go well. One must admit that this, too, looks very much like prodding and encouraging the aggressor... .

"It is even more significant that some politicians and newspapermen in Europe and the USA, having waited in vain for a 'campaign against the Soviet Ukraine', are beginning to disclose the real meaning of the policy of non-intervention. They are now plainly saying and writing in so many words that the Germans have cruelly 'disappointed' them, since instead of moving farther East, against the Soviet Union, they have, you see, turned to the West and are demanding colonies. It seems that a part of Czechoslovakia was given to the Germans as a price for starting a war against the Soviet Union and that the Germans are now refusing to deliver the goods and are telling them to get gone... .

"It is necessary to note, however, that the big and dangerous political game started by the proponents of the non-intervention policy may end very badly for them." (*18th Congress of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik), March 10-21, 1939. Stenographic Report, Gospolitizdat, 1939, pp. 13-14.*)

80. The report of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik), presented to the 18th Congress of the Party on March 10, 1939, outlined the foreign policy of the Soviet Union as follows:

"1. We stand for peace and the strengthening of business relations with all countries. We hold and will continue to hold this position so long as these countries maintain the same position with respect to the Soviet Union, so long as they do not try to violate our country's interests.

"2. We stand for peaceful, friendly and good-neighbourly relations with all countries having common borders with the USSR. We hold and will continue to hold this position so long as these countries maintain such relations with the Soviet Union, so long as they do not attempt to infringe, directly or indirectly, the safety and inviolability of the borders of the Soviet State.

"3. We are for supporting peoples who have become victims of aggression and who are fighting for the independence of their homeland.

"4. We are not afraid of threats coming from aggressors and are prepared to respond with a double blow for every blow dealt by the instigators of war trying to violate the sanctity of the Soviet borders" (*18th Congress of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik), March 10-21, 1939, Stenographic Report, Gospolitizdat, 1939, p. 15.*)

81. President Hacha of Czechoslovakia and Foreign Minister Chvalkovsky were summoned to Berlin, where in the early morning hours of March 15, 1939, they

were forced to sign a document on the liquidation of Czechoslovakia's independence.

On the same day German troops invaded Czechoslovakia and occupied the country. Czechia became a province of the German Reich, the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. Slovakia was detached from Czechia and turned into a puppet state dependent on Germany.

82. The Balkan Entente, formed on February 9, 1934, comprised Greece, Rumania, Turkey and Yugoslavia.

83. On March 17, 1939, the Soviet Ambassador in London had a conversation with Vansittart, the Chief Diplomatic Adviser to the British Foreign Secretary. Vansittart was an advocate of British co-operation with the USSR as a means of repelling Hitler's aggression. Having admitted that "the Premier's foreign policy had failed completely", Vansittart asserted that Germany's annexation of Czechoslovakia had dealt it "the final blow" and therefore "the policy of appeasement is dead and there can be no return to it".

Vansittart went on to discuss the possible direction of future Nazi aggression. "Memel and Danzig seem to be directly threatened but this is now only a minor detail. He, Vansittart, believes that the next big target of Hitler's aggressive actions will very likely be Rumania. But whatever Hitler's immediate plans are, one thing is certain: Germany's expansion can be stopped only through the creation of a bloc made up of Britain, France and the USSR and all other states threatened by German aggression, such as Poland, Rumania, Scandinavian countries." "The misfortune of 1938", said Vansittart, "lay in the fact that Hitler struck blow after blow at a Europe that was disunited and unprepared. If we want to resist German aggression in 1939 Europe must be united and prepared. The first step towards this must be a rapprochement between London, Paris and Moscow, and the elaboration of common plans of action in good time, not at the moment of crisis." As subsequent events showed, however, Vansittart was expressing his personal views, and not the views of the British Government.

In his answer the Soviet Ambassador said that he fully understood Vansittart's approach to the question, but as Vansittart knew well enough, "it is precisely London and Paris that have been systematically sabotaging every attempt at collectively rebuffing the aggressors". Vansittart acknowledged this (Soviet Foreign Policy Archives).

84. A reference to Poland's obligations under the Polish-Rumanian Treaty of Alliance of 1921 (see Note 99).

85. In evaluating the British Government's foreign policy line, the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs wrote in a letter dated March 20, 1939, that the Czechoslovak events, the ultimatum to Rumania and the violation by Germany of the Munich Agreement had caused great concern and uneasiness among the British people and that these events were being used to further their own interests by the Labour Party, the Liberal Party and some sections of the Conservative Party that had never approved of Chamberlain's policies and had called for co-operation with the USSR. "This still does not mean that Chamberlain and his associates and the more hard-headed section of the Conservative Party have come to the conclusion that a radical change in foreign policy is necessary.

"The annexation of Czechoslovakia, the pressure against Hungary, Rumania and other South-Eastern countries fully fit into the policy of directing Hitler's expansion to the East on which the Munich Agreement was based, but Chamberlain cannot say so openly, and he must, to a certain extent, meet public opinion. What is more, a flirtation with us may help Chamberlain in subsequent negotiations with Germany by making the latter more tractable."

"It is to be assumed," the letter pointed out, "that Chamberlain was guided by all these considerations when he decided to visit our Embassy and to send Hudson to us. Both the one and the other are completely unbinding, yet to a certain extent they do gag the opposition" (Soviet Foreign Policy Archives).

86. The Ambassador informed the Turkish Foreign Minister of the Soviet Government's proposal that an international conference be convened in Bucharest to discuss measures to counter the German threat to Rumania (see Documents Nos. 162, 163).

87. A reference to fascist Italy's aggression against Ethiopia (Abyssinia) in 1935. On October 7, 1935, after Italian troops invaded Ethiopia, the Council of the League of Nations declared Italy an aggressor and took a decision to apply financial and economic sanctions against her.

However, the British and French Governments, despite their officially proclaimed policy of condemning the aggressor, sought to reach agreement with Italy and elaborated various plans for the appeasement of the aggressor. One such plan was the agreement concluded on December 9, 1935, by French Prime Minister Laval and British Foreign Secretary Hoare. The Laval-Hoare agreement envisaged the cession to Italy of a considerable part of Ethiopian territory, the admission of Italian "advisers" to Ethiopian government departments, and the granting to Italy of exclusive economic privileges in Ethiopia. The Anglo-French diplomatic conspiracy against the Ethiopian people was soon exposed and aroused profound indignation in Britain, France and other countries. Hoare was compelled to resign.

Encouraged by the policy of connivance at aggression pursued by Britain and France, Italy seized the entire territory of Ethiopia. On July 4, 1936, the League of Nations decided to lift the sanctions against Italy. Meanwhile, Turkey's participation in the sanctions led to a worsening of her relations with Italy.

Under the Anglo-Italian Agreement of April 16, 1938, the British Government recognized Italy's sovereignty over Ethiopia (see Note 15). On November 16, 1938, the date on which the Agreement entered into force, the British Ambassador in Rome, Lord Perth, presented to Foreign Minister Ciano new credentials addressed "to the King of Italy and Emperor of Ethiopia". In November 1938 France also recognized Italy's sovereignty over Ethiopia.

88. On March 21-22, 1939, talks were held in London between Bonnet, on the one hand, and Chamberlain and Halifax, on the other. The talks were initiated in connection with Germany's seizure of Czechoslovakia and the threat of German aggression against Rumania and Poland (*Documents on British Foreign Policy. 1919-1939*, Third Series, Vol. IV, pp. 423-427, 457-463).

89. On February 12, 1939, Franco's Foreign Minister, General Jordana, intimated to the German Ambassador that the fascist Government of Spain was ready to join the "Anti-Comintern Pact" (see Note 24). However, Jordana requested that Franco would not be pressed in formalizing the matter as this might cause delay in the recognition of the rebels by Britain and France (*Documents on German Foreign Policy. 1918-1945*, Series D, Vol. III, p. 838).

On February 27, 1939, the British and French Governments officially recognized the Franco regime in Spain. On April 1, 1939, the US Government also officially recognized Franco.

In this connection *Pravda* noted: "The world has once again been the witness of a monstrous deal made by British and French diplomacy with the fascist aggressors... The victim of this collusion is not only the heroic Republican Spain... The vital interests of France and Britain themselves are affected. The more sober-minded people in both countries are aware of the tragic consequences of the policy of capitulating to the fascist aggressors" (*Pravda*, March 1, 1939).

On March 27, 1939, the Protocol of the accession of Franco Spain to the Anti-Comintern Pact was signed (*Documents on German Foreign Policy. 1918-1945*, Series D, Vol. III, p. 881).

On March 28, 1939, Franco's forces occupied Madrid. The first to enter the Spanish capital were Italian interventionist troops.

The conversion of Spain into an ally of Germany and Italy strengthened the positions of the aggressor countries in Europe.

90. On March 22, 1939, the Nazis imposed on the Lithuanian Government a treaty on the transfer of Klaipeda to Germany. As a sop for this capitulation the treaty granted Lithuania a "free-port zone" in Klaipeda and guaranteed the sale of Lithuanian agricultural products on German markets. Under Article 4 of the treaty both Sides undertook not to use force against each other. (*Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945, Series D, Vol. V, pp. 530-531*).
91. On May 8, 1924, the representatives of France, Great Britain, Italy and Japan signed in Paris the Klaipeda (Memel) Convention elaborated by a commission of the League of Nations Council, under which the Klaipeda region was recognized as an integral part of Lithuania. In March 1939 Nazi Germany occupied Klaipeda. The British and French Governments tacitly accepted this act of aggression without even making a protest to Germany, although they had been among the signatories of the Klaipeda Convention.
92. On February 19, 1939, Seeds, the British Ambassador in Moscow, informed the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs that the Parliamentary Secretary of the Department of Overseas Trade, Hudson, was planning to come to Moscow at the end of March. On the same day the People's Commissar told Seeds that the Soviet Government agreed to receive Hudson (see Document No. 129).
 In a conversation with the Soviet Ambassador in London on March 8 Hudson emphasized that his mission would extend beyond the limits of purely commercial discussions, and on March 18 Halifax told the Soviet Ambassador that Hudson "was ready to discuss any matters in Moscow—not only economic, but also political questions" (Soviet Foreign Policy Archives).
 After his arrival in Moscow, Hudson had conversations on March 23 and 25 with the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, M. M. Litvinov and the People's Commissar for Foreign Trade, A. I. Mikoyan, and he was also received by the Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR, V. M. Molotov. Informing the Soviet Ambassador in London of the discussions with Hudson, the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs wrote on March 28 that "on the whole it must be recognized that the visit was quite unfruitful both in the political and in the economic respect" (Soviet Foreign Policy Archives).
93. The Treaty for the Promotion of Economic Relations between Germany and Rumania signed in Bucharest on March 23, 1939, practically placed Rumania's economy under German control. The Treaty provided for the elaboration, with due regard for Germany's import requirements, of an "economic plan" embracing the main branches of Rumania's economy—agriculture, mining, the oil and the timber industry and so forth.
 Wohlthat, who signed the Treaty on behalf of Germany, said in his report to Goering that now "all South East European countries were compelled to see who possessed ascendancy on the Danube, supported by economic realities" (*Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945, Series D, Vol. VI, p. 164*).
94. On March 27, 1939, the People's Commissar wrote to the Soviet Ambassador in London: "The TASS communiqué agreed upon with Hudson gives a clear and concise account of the discussions we had had with him. His draft was still cooler; it referred merely to trade talks and had nothing to say about political conversations" (Soviet Foreign Policy Archives).
 After the text of the TASS communique on Hudson's visit to Moscow from March 20 to 28, 1939, had been agreed upon with Hudson, the British Embassy in Moscow received instructions from London that no mention should be made in the communique of political talks. By that time, however, the TASS communique had already been handed to the press.
 On this subject the People's Commissar noted on March 28, 1939, to the Soviet Ambassador in London: "It is necessary, however, to ascertain the motives behind this outrageous development. The British press had loudly declared that Hudson's mission was political rather than economic, and now suddenly they propose that nothing at all be said about politics. The TASS communique already gives the impression that the visit was without results, but even

such a communique now meets with objections" (Soviet Foreign Policy Archives).

In this period, faced with new aggressive acts by Germany and Italy, the British Government wanted to create an impression that contacts had been established between Britain and the Soviet Union and negotiations were in progress. In reality, however, it did not want to reach any understanding with the USSR. This will be seen from the telegram sent by British Ambassador Seeds to Halifax on March 28, 1939, in which he pointed out that the TASS communique "presents a picture of what I would myself wish Anglo-Soviet relations to be, namely friendliness and contacts, but no obligations" (*Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939*, Third Series, Vol. IV, p. 524).

95. The Treaty for the Renunciation of War as an Instrument of National Policy (the Briand-Kellogg Pact) was signed on August 27, 1928, by representatives of the USA, France, Great Britain, Germany, Poland, and several other states. On September 6, 1928, the Soviet Union joined the Pact.

Because of delays in the ratification of this Pact and thus of the postponement of its entry into force, the USSR proposed that Poland, Lithuania, Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Rumania sign a Protocol on the entry into force of the Briand-Kellogg Pact between the signatories of the Protocol without awaiting the general ratification of the Pact. On February 9, 1929, the USSR, Poland, Rumania, Estonia and Latvia signed in Moscow a Protocol on the entry into force of the Briand-Kellogg Pact. The Moscow Protocol was also signed by Turkey, Iran and Lithuania.

96. In September 1938 Soviet troops were concentrated at the country's western frontiers owing to the threat of aggressive actions by Germany and Poland against Czechoslovakia (see Note 39).

97. In reality, however, Poland concerted her actions with the German Government which assured her that in the event of a Soviet-Polish conflict Poland could count on German assistance (see Document No. 7).

98. A reference to the TASS communique published in the Soviet press on April 4, 1939, which refuted a report put out by the French news agency, Havas, saying that the Soviet Union had undertaken in the event of war to supply Poland with war materials (*Izvestia*, April 4, 1939).

99. The Polish-Rumanian Treaty of Alliance was signed on March 3, 1921, in Bucharest. After the Great October Socialist Revolution Poland and Rumania had taken part in the military intervention against Soviet Russia. At that time Poland had seized Western Ukraine and Western Byelorussia and Rumania had taken over Bessarabia. Poland and Rumania concluded the Treaty with the aim of rendering each other assistance in the consolidation of their control over the seized territories and also of carrying out new seizures of Soviet lands.

Under the Treaty Poland and Rumania undertook to give each other military support in the event of either one of them being at war with Soviet Russia (Article 1); to co-ordinate their policies towards Soviet Russia (Article 2); to conclude a Polish-Rumanian military convention (Article 3); and not to conduct negotiations for a separate peace in the event of war with Soviet Russia (Article 4). Article 5 said that the Treaty was to remain in force for a period of 5 years. In 1926, 1931 and 1936 the Treaty was prolonged for successive five-year periods.

In March-April 1939 Britain offered guarantees to Poland and Rumania without stipulating that they were directed against Germany. In this connection, and considering the anti-Soviet nature of the Polish-Rumanian Treaty, the Soviet Government, on April 17, 1939, proposed that the British Government should make it clear that the guarantees to Poland and Rumania were being offered only in the event of German aggression (see Document No. 239).

In the spring of 1939 the Soviet and British Governments indicated to Poland and Rumania the desirability of revising the Polish-Rumanian Treaty in such a

way that the two countries would pledge themselves to come to one another's assistance only in the event of either of them being attacked by Germany. However, the Polish Government refused to make the relevant changes in the Treaty as it had no intention of opposing the use of Rumanian territory by Germany as a springboard for an attack on the USSR. In this connection the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs wrote on April 13, 1939; "Beck is deliberately trying to block all guarantees to Rumania so as to prod German aggression in that direction. As far back as 1934 Beck told me here in Moscow that Germany would use Rumania as a springboard for an offensive against the Ukraine, and Beck evinced no concern on that score. It could be understood that he had an agreement with Hitler on that subject" (Soviet Foreign Policy Archives).

100. On April 7, 1939, Italian troops invaded Albania. This action by fascist Italy was a flagrant violation of the Anglo-Italian Agreement of April 16, 1938, which provided for the preservation of the *status quo* in the Mediterranean (see Note 15). However, the British Government went no further than to instruct its Ambassador in Rome to remind the Italian Government that Britain was entitled to "the frankest and fullest explanation... of the future intentions of the Italian Government" (*Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939*, Third Series, Vol. V, p. 131).

101. A reference to the parliamentary debate on foreign policy which took place in the House of Commons on April 3, 1939. Prominent members of the Opposition parties and some Conservatives demanded closer relations with the Soviet Union in the face of the mounting threat of fascist aggression. Thus, the leader of the Liberal Party, Lloyd George, said: "I ask the Government to take immediate steps to secure the adhesion of Russia in a fraternity, an alliance, an agreement, a pact, it does not matter what it is called so long as it is an understanding to stand together against the aggressor" (*Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons*, Vol. 345, Col. 2516). Greenwood, Deputy Leader of the Labour Party, said that England could not ignore the Soviet Union which had declared its willingness to stand by any kind of understanding which would keep the peace through the establishment of collective security (*Ibid.*, Col. 2486). Criticizing the Chamberlain Government, another Labour Member of Parliament, Dalton, pointed out that it was high time to pass from general declarations of friendliness to positive and continuous "co-operation between London and Moscow with a view to bringing the Soviet Union, with all its tremendous forces, effectively into this combination against aggression" (*Ibid.*, Col. 2579). The desirability of securing "the best possible relations with the Soviet Government of Russia" was also stressed by Eden, a member of the Conservative Party (*Ibid.*, Col. 2519).

The parliamentary debate of April 3, 1939, was in its way a barometer of British public opinion which, after Nazi Germany's seizure of Czechoslovakia, tended increasingly to favour the setting up of a collective front against aggression, contrary to the political line pursued by the Chamberlain Government.

102. The conversation between the Ambassador of the USSR in France and Bonnet took place on April 10, 1939 (See also Note 106).

103. In explaining Britain's position on the Soviet proposal of April 17, 1939, that an agreement be reached on mutual assistance between the USSR, Britain and France (see Document No. 239), British Foreign Secretary Halifax told a meeting of the British Cabinet on April 26, 1939, that "time was not ripe for so comprehensive a proposal, and we proposed to ask the Russian Government to give further consideration to our plan" (*Public Record Office, CAB. 23/39*, p. 58). At a Cabinet meeting on May 3, 1939, Halifax said he was asking Russia "whether she would be prepared to make a unilateral declaration that she would give help, at such time and in such form as might be acceptable to Poland and Rumania" (*Ibid.*, CAB, 26/39, p. 128).

104. On April 14, 1939, US President Roosevelt sent a message to Hitler and Mus-

solini calling for a settlement of existing problems through negotiations, that is, by peaceful methods. In his message Roosevelt asked Hitler and Mussolini whether they would give assurance that in the next 10 or 25 years their armed forces would not attack the 30 countries of Europe and the Middle East enumerated in the message. Declaring the readiness of the United States to take part in negotiations on disarmament and the expansion of international trade, provided Hitler and Mussolini gave a positive reply to the aforesaid question, Roosevelt offered his good offices as an intermediary (*The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, 1939, pp. 201-205).

Mussolini, in his speech of April 20, 1939, and Hitler, in his speech of April 28, 1939, (see Note 109) rejected Roosevelt's proposal.

105. In his speech to the 18th Congress of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik) in March 1939, the People's Commissar for Defence of the USSR, K. Y. Voroshilov, discussed the organizational strengthening of Soviet armed forces and the growth of their fighting capacity. He said that since 1934, that is, in the interim period between two Congresses, the numerical strength of the Red Army had grown twofold. The fire power of a one-minute salvo of a Red Army infantry corps in 1939 amounted to 78,932 kg as compared with 60,981 kg for a French corps and 59,509 kg for a German corps. The Soviet Air Force (in terms of both aircraft and personnel) had grown more than twofold since 1934. The simultaneous bomb salvo had increased threefold (*18th Congress of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik), March 10-21, 1939. Stenographic Report*, Moscow, 1939, pp. 191-196).

106. Assessing this draft of the three-power agreement, the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR wrote on April 28, 1939: "Bonnet's modified proposal sounds almost like a mockery. If the original proposal was at least couched in such a way as to give a semblance of reciprocity and equality, and assistance to us was offered also in the event of our taking action on our own initiative, according to the new proposal we will receive assistance only in the event that Britain and France should, on their own initiative, take action leading to a conflict with Germany and in the event that they receive our assistance".

The only positive point in this draft, the People's Commissar pointed out, is the fact that the original proposal provided only for assistance to Poland and Rumania, whereas the new proposal envisages the prevention of all forcible changes in the *status quo* in Central and Eastern Europe (Soviet Foreign Policy Archives).

107. The Treaty signed between the RSFSR and Germany at Rapallo on April 16, 1922, has been interpreted in the history of international relations as a renunciation by the German ruling circles of the unilateral orientation of German foreign policy towards the West, as a result of which she decided to establish normal and mutually advantageous relations with the Soviet Union. Under the Treaty of Rapallo, the RSFSR and Germany resumed diplomatic relations; the two Sides renounced compensation for military and non-military losses, and Germany recognized the nationalization of German property in the RSFSR. Provision was made for the development of economic ties between the two countries according to the principle of the most favoured nation treatment (*Documents on Soviet Foreign Policy*, Vol. V, Moscow, 1961, pp. 223-224).

The conclusion of the Treaty of Rapallo was an outstanding success for Soviet diplomacy in its struggle to establish peaceful relations with capitalist countries on the basis of equality and non-interference in one another's internal affairs. The Treaty of Rapallo was to Germany's advantage as well, as it restored the traditional economic ties between the two states and strengthened Germany's positions in the foreign policy field.

108. The gist of the German proposals to Poland set out by Ribbentrop on March 21, 1939, to Polish Ambassador Lipski was as follows:

Danzig as a separate entity would again become part of the German Reich.

Germany would also be entitled to build an extra-territorial railway line and an Autobahn linking Germany with East Prussia (*Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945*, Series D, Vol. VI, pp. 70-72).

In a telegram dated March 23, 1939, Ribbentrop instructed the German Ambassador in Warsaw to tell the Polish Government that the transfer of Danzig to Germany would strengthen Poland's international position and that Germany and Poland could then pursue a common Eastern policy as both countries were interested in "warding off Bolshevism" (*Ibid.*, p. 86).

On March 26, 1939, Lipski handed Ribbentrop a Memorandum of the Polish Government rejecting the aforesaid German proposals (*Ibid.*, pp. 121-124).

On April 28, 1939, Germany denounced the German-Polish Non-Aggression Declaration of 1934 on the ground of the Polish Government's rejection of the German proposals (see Notes 22, 109 and 110).

109. A reference to Hitler's speech in the Reichstag on April 28, 1939. In it Hitler criticized the Versailles system of treaties and attempted to justify the Anschluss of Austria and the seizure of Czechoslovakia. He also said that the Munich Agreement had not solved all the problems relating to the revision of European boundaries. Hitler denounced the Anglo-German Naval Agreement of 1935 (see Note 3), and at the same time expressed a desire to establish friendly relations with Britain provided the latter showed understanding of German interests.

Hitler also announced that the Polish Government had rejected the German proposal for "settling" differences between Germany and Poland and that Germany had annulled the Polish-German Non-Aggression Declaration of 1934 (see Notes 22, 108 and 110).

Hitler devoted a large part of his speech to an analysis of the message of US President Roosevelt (see Note 104). Seeking to justify his aggressive policies by arguments about the need for Germany to have "living space", Hitler declared that since 1918 the United States had undertaken military intervention on six occasions, that more than one African state had lost its independence, and that the bombs that were falling upon the heads of the Maroccans, the Berbers, the Arabs, the Negroes and other peoples were "made in democratic countries".

110. On April 28, 1939, the German Chargé d'Affaires in Poland handed to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Poland a German Memorandum, dated April 27, 1939, which said that Poland, in entering into allied relationships with Britain (see Documents Nos. 201 and 213), had in effect nullified the German-Polish Declaration of 1934 (see Note 22). Further on in the Memorandum the German Government expressed its regret that the Polish Government had rejected the German proposal for a "settlement" of the Danzig question and the establishment of a final Polish-German frontier (*Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945*, Series D, Vol. VI, pp. 347-351).

In its reply to the German Memorandum, dated May 5, 1939, the Polish Government denied the German Government's allegation that the Anglo-Polish communique on mutual guarantees was incompatible with the German-Polish Declaration of 1934. At the same time the Polish Government expressed its readiness to begin negotiations for a new treaty on regulating German-Polish relations on the basis of the principle of good-neighbourliness (*Ibid.*, pp. 357-360).

111. As a result of these talks, on May 12, 1939, a joint Anglo-Turkish Declaration was published, which said that the two Sides intended to conclude a long-term agreement "in the interest of their national security". Pending the conclusion of the agreement the Governments of Britain and Turkey expressed their readiness "to co-operate effectively and to lend each other all aid and assistance" in the event of an act of aggression leading to war in the Mediterranean area. The two governments recognized the necessity of ensuring security in the Balkans and were consulting together with the object of achieving this purpose (*Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939*, Third Series, Vol. V, p. 497).

112. The British Government was continuing its old line by seeking to get the USSR to render assistance to Britain in the event of her being involved in a war, while refusing to discuss the rendering of any assistance by Britain to the Soviet Union. The Secretary-General of the French Foreign Ministry, Léger, observed in a conversation with the US Ambassador in Paris, Bullitt, that the British Government was continuing to seek unilateral Soviet guarantees to Poland and Rumania but was "not ready to give any British guarantee whatsoever to the Soviet Union". (*Foreign Relations of the United States, 1939*, Vol. 1, p. 244). In a dispatch to the State Department of May 5, 1939, even Bullitt described the British Government's policy towards the USSR since Hitler's invasion of Czechoslovakia as "dilatatory and almost insulting" (*Ibid.*, p. 248). He reported that both French Foreign Minister Bonnet and the British Ambassador in Paris, Phipps, were "opposed to bringing the Soviet Union into close co-operation with France and England" (*Ibid.*, p. 250). The French Chargé d'Affaires in the USSR, Payart, also noted that by their attitude the British had "from the Soviet point of view merely added insult to injury" (*Ibid.*).
113. In accordance with this assessment of the British proposal of May 8 (see Document No. 279) the Soviet Ambassador in London criticized the proposal in a conversation with Halifax on May 9, 1939. He pointed out that "the British formula is not based on the principle of reciprocity". Halifax finally agreed to consider "another formula", but said that it should take into account the fact that the British Government had offered guarantees to Poland and Rumania "on the conditions that (a) there was a direct or indirect threat to their independence and (b) they themselves offered resistance to the aggressor" (Soviet Foreign Policy Archives).
- In a conversation with the Soviet Ambassador on May 11, 1939, Halifax made an additional reservation: the Soviet "counter-formula" could be applied "only to Poland and Rumania but not to the Baltic States" (Soviet Foreign Policy Archives).
- According to the British Government's proposal of May 8 and the statements made by Halifax, Britain was prepared to co-operate in some measure with the USSR in combating aggression only if Germany were to commit aggression against Poland or Rumania and if they offered resistance to the aggressor. But the British Government did not want to conclude an Anglo-Franco-Soviet treaty of mutual assistance against aggression, under which it would be obliged to render assistance to the Soviet Union in the event of a direct attack upon it.
- If Germany began aggressive actions in the Baltic region and the Soviet Union decided to oppose them Britain could again remain on the sidelines.
- And finally, if the ruling circles of Poland and Rumania agreed to let German troops through their territory without offering any resistance, or if, moreover, they made an arrangement with the Nazis for joint action against the USSR, the USSR would again have had to fight Germany alone.
114. On May 6-7, 1939, talks were held in Milan between German Foreign Minister Ribbentrop and Italian Foreign Minister Ciano. The official communique on these talks said that the two Ministers had "decided finally to define, in a formal manner, the relations between the two States of the Axis in a political and military pact". Such a pact between Germany and Italy was signed on May 22, 1939 (*Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945, Series D, Vol. VI, pp. 450-452*).
115. A reference to Chamberlain's statement in the House of Commons on March 31, 1939 (see Document No. 201), and the provisional agreement reached during the Anglo-Polish negotiations in London on April 4-6, 1939 (see Document No. 213).
116. On May 22, 1939 the Chinese representative, Wellington Koo, submitted a proposal to the Council of the League of Nations requesting that the Council ask the member-states of the League:

first, to extend financial and material aid to China; to refrain from any action which might weaken China's resistance; to withhold from Japan the supply of instruments of war and raw materials necessary for the continuation of her aggression against China, particularly aeroplanes and oil; and to restrict the importation of Japanese goods, and adopt other means of retaliation against Japan's deliberate violation of the treaty rights of Member-States;

second, to set up a special body of the Powers directly interested in the Far East for the purpose of co-ordinating the foregoing measures;

third, to continue to implement the Assembly and Council resolutions already adopted with a view to extending aid to China and restraining the aggressors (*League of Nations. Official Journal*, May-June 1939, pp. 250-254).

117. While agreeing to begin talks with the USSR, the British ruling circles continued their attempts to come to terms with Nazi Germany. This was evidenced both by Chamberlain's public statements and by the appeals communicated to the Germans through official and unofficial channels.

On May 19, 1939, Chamberlain declared in the House of Commons that the British Government would not refuse to discuss any method by which reasonable aspirations on the part of other nations could be satisfied, even if it meant some adjustment of the existing state of things. There are many concessions, he said, which might without too great difficulty be made if one could be quite certain that those concessions would be used only for the purposes for which they were given (*Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons*, Vol. 347, Col. 1840).

On the same day Halifax asked Dirksen, the German Ambassador in London, to inform Hitler that it would be desirable for the latter to make a public statement indicating Germany's desire for peace and listing the questions that could be discussed in direct Anglo-German talks. Halifax pointed out that such a step by Hitler would "evoke a favourable response in official quarters" in Britain and would open "the door to further improvement" of Anglo-German relations (*Documents on British Foreign Policy. 1919-1939*, Third Series, Vol. V, pp. 600-603).

On June 8, 1939, in a written answer to a question in the House of Commons, Chamberlain reiterated Britain's desire to reach agreement with Nazi Germany, emphasizing that any suggestions that Britain wished "to isolate Germany or to stand in the way of the natural and legitimate extension of her trade in Central and South-Eastern Europe or to plan some combination against her with the idea of making war upon her were fantastic" (*Parliamentary Debates. House of Commons*, Vol. 348, Col. 635-636).

In the evening of June 8, 1939, at Lady Astor's manor in Cliveden, Chamberlain met informally with a representative of the German ruling circles, a certain Trott zu Solz, and said to him that "the European problem could only be solved on the line Berlin-London" (*Documents on German Foreign Policy. 1918-1945*, Series D, Vol. VI, p. 682).

118. In accordance with the instructions of the People's Commissar (see Document No. 301) the Soviet representative was here referring to a speech made by British Prime Minister Chamberlain in the House of Commons on May 19, 1939. In that speech Chamberlain quoted the statement made by Stalin in his report to the 18th Congress of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik) on March 10, to the effect that the Soviet Union was in favour of giving support to peoples who had become victims of aggression and who were fighting for the independence of their homeland (see Note 80), and declared: "That is our own point of view" (*Parliamentary Debates. House of Commons*, Vol. 347, Col. 1847).

In reality, however, the British Government had no intention of giving aid to the victims of aggression. It wanted to reach agreement with the aggressive Powers. Three days after the above-mentioned speech by Chamberlain, when the question arose of taking concrete steps to assist a victim of aggression, China, Foreign Secretary Halifax told a meeting of the League of

Nations Council on May 22, 1939: "His Majesty's Government feels unable to support the far-reaching proposals now advanced on behalf of China" (*League of Nations. Official Journal*, May-June, 1939, pp. 254-255).

At the same time the British Government was pursuing a policy of collusion with the Japanese aggressors at the expense of China. On July 24, 1939, an Anglo-Japanese agreement ("the Arita-Craigie Agreement") was made public under which the British Government actually recognized the "legality" of Japanese seizures in China (see Note 134).

In these circumstances the resolution adopted by the League of Nations Council on May 27, 1939, merely expressed the hope that the measures taken by a number of states to aid China would be continued and that the resolutions previously adopted by the League of Nations would remain in force, and it appealed to the members of the League to examine the possibilities of further measures to aid China (*League of Nations. Official Journal*, May-June 1939, p. 277).

Besides political support, as the above document shows, the Soviet Union rendered ever-increasing military aid to China in her struggle against the Japanese aggressors (see Documents Nos. 334, 335 and Notes 5, 125, 126).

119. In discussing the Aaland question at a meeting of the League of Nations Council, the Soviet representative made a statement on May 27, 1939, to the effect that the USSR was concerned about the status of the Aaland Islands not only as a member of the League of Nations Council "but more particularly and directly as a State which is adjacent to the Gulf of Finland". "The Soviet Government is not clear", the Soviet delegate said, "as to the objectives of the contemplated fortification of Aaland Archipelago, to what extent they will be undertaken, against whom they are directed and, last but not least, what are the guarantees against the possibility that the fortifications may be used by an aggressive Power against the USSR, whose territory is in close proximity to that of the Aaland Islands." In view of these considerations the Soviet Government is of the opinion, the statement went on to say, that any decision on the Aaland question should be postponed (*Izvestia*, May 29, 1939).

120. In those days, notably as a result of the conclusion on May 22 of the German-Italian alliance, the question was discussed in Britain of her future attitude to the Anglo-Franco-Soviet negotiations. This was reflected in the memorandum drawn up on May 22, 1939, in the Foreign Office (see *Documents on British Foreign Policy. 1919-1939*, Third Series, Vol. V, pp. 640-646).

In discussing the pros and cons of an Anglo-Franco-Soviet treaty of mutual assistance, the authors of the memorandum noted that, on the negative side, such a treaty might lead to the conclusion "that His Majesty's Government had finally given up all hope of arriving at a settlement with Germany..." The ruling circles of Britain were still hoping to reach an agreement with Nazi Germany (see Note 117) and did not wish to create that impression. Furthermore, the memorandum expressed the fear lest Britain, once the treaty was concluded, "either by the failure of Poland or Rumania to resist a German advance or by a German attack on the Soviet Union by sea or through the Baltic States, might be drawn into a war not for the preservation of the independence of a minor European State, but for the support of the Soviet Union against Germany". And the British Government did not wish to help the Soviet Union.

At the same time the authors of the memorandum had to admit that such an agreement had certain positive aspects for Britain. Such a treaty, the memorandum said, might be "the only way to avert war". Finally, the authors of the memorandum believed it desirable to conclude some kind of agreement whereby in the event of an attack on Britain the Soviet Union would have to come to her assistance: (a) so that Germany should have to fight a two-front war and (b) in order to "try to involve the Soviet Union" in the war too, so that it should not remain unharmed while Britain and Germany were reduced to ruins.

121. On May 5, 1939, while passing through Belgrade, Rumanian Foreign Minister Gafencu met with the Regent, Prince Paul, and the Yugoslav Foreign Minister, Cinkar-Markovic. They discussed the positions of the members of the Balkan Entente on major international problems, notably the signing of the Anglo-Turkish Declaration (see Note 111). In the course of further discussions two weeks later Cinkar-Markovic told Gafencu that the conclusion of the Anglo-Turkish agreement which was being negotiated at the time between Britain and Turkey was contrary to the understanding reached between the members of the Balkan Entente on non-alignment with either of the two opposing groups of European States. The Yugoslav Minister reproached the Turkish Government for having signed a joint Declaration with Britain without asking the advice of its Balkan allies (*Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939*, Third Series, Vol. V, pp. 659-663).
122. On June 5, 1939, the Latvian Minister in Belgium, Valters, sent a report to the Latvian Foreign Ministry in which he described the reaction in the capitals of the Western countries to the progress of the Anglo-Franco-Soviet talks. Referring to the question "why Chamberlain does not want to give guarantees to the Baltic States" Valters reported that the Chinese Ambassador in Brussels, Chin Tai, who had just returned from Britain, said he had obtained the following information from authoritative sources in London: "The Baltic States are being left outside of any guarantees, and thus Germany is being shown the way leading to the frontiers of the Soviet Union. If certain borders are left unguaranteed it clearly follows that they may be attacked." According to the Ambassador, it was pointed out in London that "Chamberlain wants to see Germany finally involved in a state of conflict with the Soviet Union—something that has long since been one of Chamberlain's aims" (Diplomatic History Archives).
123. A reference to a mission similar to the Runciman Mission sent to Czechoslovakia in the summer of 1938 (see Note 50).
124. In this *aide mémoire* the Soviet Government made a new major proposal. Its purpose in doing so was to withdraw for the time being the question of guarantees to other countries since Britain objected to offering Anglo-Franco-Soviet guarantees to the Baltic States, and to bring about as soon as possible the conclusion of a three-power agreement on mutual assistance to one another. This represented an important concession on the part of the Soviet Union. However, the British and French Governments rejected the proposal and thus proved once again that they were not interested in the prompt completion of the talks and the conclusion of an agreement.
125. This inventory shows that the Soviet Union was to deliver to China 120 aircraft complete with battle equipment, shells and cartridges, 83 aircraft engines, spare parts for the aircraft and other military materials (Central Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Trade of the USSR).
126. On June 13, 1939 a Treaty was signed in Moscow between the Governments of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the Chinese Republic on the Realization of Credit to the Sum of 150 Million American Dollars.
- Article 1 of this Treaty reads: "The Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics shall extend to the Government of the Chinese Republic credit to the amount of 150 million American dollars according to the exchange rate as of June 13, 1939 (one American dollar equals 0.88867 grams of gold), for purchases by the Government of the Chinese Republic of industrial goods and equipment of Soviet origin in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics." The Treaty provided that the Parties would conclude "contracts for various categories of deliveries of industrial goods and equipment on the basis of the credit". At the request of the Chinese Government the Soviet Government agreed to assume responsibility for the shipment of the purchased industrial goods and equipment to their destination in China.

This credit enabled China to make new purchases in the USSR of aircraft, guns, machine guns and other armaments, and also industrial goods, motor vehicles, oil products, etc. In accordance with the inventory appended to the published contract, the Soviet Union delivered to China 250 artillery pieces, 4,400 machine-guns, 50,000 rifles, 500 lorries, approximately 16,500 aerial bombs, over 500,000 shells, 100 million cartridges, and other military supplies.

Furthermore, under three contracts subsequently concluded in accordance with the Treaty of June 13, 1939, the Soviet Union sent to China over 300 aircraft, 350 lorries and tractors, 250 artillery pieces, 1,300 machine-guns and also large quantities of bombs, shells, cartridges, electrical equipment, navigation equipment, maintenance equipment, fuel and lubricants, and other military supplies to the sum of approximately 70 million American dollars (Central Archive of the Ministry for Foreign Trade of the USSR).

This Treaty attested to the fact that the Soviet Union gave extensive aid to the Chinese people in their struggle against the Japanese aggressors (see also Notes 5 and 125).

127. In presenting their draft of Article 1 of the Treaty of Mutual Assistance between Great Britain, France and the USSR, the British and French Ambassadors stated: "Taking into account the point of view of the Soviet Government and the geographical facts, the neighbouring European countries whose integrity constitutes an element of the security of the USSR are, if the two Governments are not mistaken, the Baltic States, Poland and Rumania. As far as France and Great Britain are concerned, the neighbouring European countries which have for the security of these two States the same importance as the five others have for that of Russia are Belgium, Holland and Switzerland" (*Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939*, Third Series, Vol. VI, p. 135).

In addition, the French Ambassador made a personal suggestion that the countries that were being offered guarantees by the three Powers should be listed in a separate document which need not be published (*Ibid.*, p. 141).

The British and French tried to make it appear as if the new Anglo-French proposal took into account all the wishes of the USSR and the interests of its security, including those relating to the extension of guarantees to the Baltic States. In reality this was not so. When Deputy People's Commissar Potemkin, who was present at the conversation between the People's Commissar and the Ambassadors of Britain and France on June 21, asked with whom would lie the decision on the question whether or not aggression on a European state constituted a menace to the security of one of the three Powers, the Ambassadors were compelled to admit that "nothing was said" in their draft on this point (*Ibid.*). In a telegram to the Soviet Ambassadors in Britain and France, dated June 25, 1939, the People's Commissar pointed out that what the British and French were trying to make the world believe, namely that the latest Anglo-French proposals met the wishes of the USSR in respect of the Baltic States, was not to be taken seriously (Soviet Foreign Policy Archives).

At the same time in their proposal the British and French Governments officially raised the question of extending the three-Power guarantees to Holland and Switzerland. This would have meant a substantial broadening of the obligations to be assumed by the USSR.

128. The Tientsin conflict began in June 1939. The Japanese Government, which had been bringing constant pressure to bear on Britain, France and the United States so as to compel them to recognize Japanese seizures in China, imposed a blockade on the British concession in Tientsin on June 14, 1939. Japanese police occupied all the approaches to the Concession and allowed British nationals to pass through only after they had been subjected to a humiliating search and interrogation. Business activity in the Concession came to a standstill. The pretext for the blockade was the Japanese demand that the Concession authorities hand over four Chinese who had been accused by the Japanese of having murdered one of their agents. In response to the request of the British Ambassador in Tokyo, Craigie, to lift the blockade, Japanese Foreign Minister Arita declared on June 24, 1939 that the Japanese Government would

continue the same policy until Britain agreed to co-operate with Japan in China (*Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939*, Third Series, Vol. IX, p. 220) (see also Note 134).

129. On June 27, 1939 the British Ambassador in Germany, Henderson, handed to Weizsaecker, the State Secretary of the German Foreign Ministry, a memorandum in connection with the denunciation by Germany of the Anglo-German Naval Agreement of 1935 (see Note 3). In its memorandum the British Government said that it could not regard the denunciation of that agreement by the German Government as being justified and lawful. At the same time the British Government expressed its desire to begin negotiations for the conclusion of a new Naval Agreement between Germany and Britain (*Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939*, Third Series, Vol. VI, pp. 153-158).

130. A reference to the Political Report of the German Ambassador in London, Dirksen, to the German Foreign Ministry of June 24, 1939, a copy of which he also sent on June 27, 1939, to Weizsaecker personally.

In that report Dirksen, describing the mood of the British ruling circles, noted their desire to reach understanding with Germany. He intimated that the British Government was using the Anglo-Franco-Soviet negotiations in Moscow as a cover for future and more serious negotiations with Germany. "There is a growing conviction," he wrote, "that building a non-aggression front must only be a foundation and prerequisite for a constructive policy towards Germany." The British believed, Dirksen pointed out, that gaining new allies and increasing armaments would give the British Government an opportunity to enter into discussion with Germany on German demands in respect of the colonies and on other matters from stronger positions than in Munich or in March 1939. In the Ambassador's opinion, this tendency was reflected in the speech of British Foreign Secretary Halifax in the House of Lords on June 8, 1939, in which he emphasized Britain's constant desire or mutual understanding with Germany. Dirksen regarded that speech as an attempt gradually to prepare "public opinion at home for an attempt at a constructive policy towards Germany" (*Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945*, Series D, Vol. VI, pp. 781-782).

131. In a conversation with German Ambassador Welzcek on July 1, 1939, French Foreign Minister Bonnet touched upon the question of Polish-German relations. In accordance with the instructions he had received from Berlin, the Ambassador made it quite plain that Germany intended to "settle" her relations with Poland that very year. Referring to the "military and economic strength" of Germany, Welzcek threatened that France would face catastrophic consequences if she rendered support to Poland. The Ambassador informed Berlin that Bonnet "described very fully his services in the cause of an understanding with Germany and in bringing about the Munich Agreement, which, by excluding the use of force in future, was to form the basis for a settlement of all Germany's just claims." To achieve such a settlement, in Bonnet's opinion, "the present state of tension on our (Germany's) Eastern frontier and especially in Danzig, must give way to a calmer atmosphere."

At the close of the conversation Bonnet spoke of his "relations of friendship and trust" with Ribbentrop and asked that a personal Note be transmitted from him to the German Minister (*Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945*, Series D, Vol. VI, pp. 828-829).

In the Note Bonnet said that he believed it to be his duty to recall the existence of the Franco-Polish alliance (see Note 46) and the French Declaration on the granting of guarantees to Greece and Rumania (see Document No. 229), and also to note that in the event of any action aimed at modifying the *status quo* in Danzig and so provoking armed resistance by Poland, France would be obliged to put the Franco-Polish Agreement into operation (*Ibid.*, p. 827).

132. At that time the British ruling circles were even considering a breakdown of the Anglo-Franco-Soviet negotiations. They decided that the question of defin-

ing "indirect aggression" would provide the best pretext both for a breakdown in the talks and for their further delay. Thus, the British Ambassador in Moscow, Seeds, noted in his telegram to Halifax on July 12 that to bring about a breakdown in the negotiations it would be better to use the question of indirect aggression than the question of a military agreement (*Documents on British Foreign Policy. 1919-1939, Third Series, Vol. VI, p. 332*).

The possibility of a breakdown of the negotiations was also discussed in detail in Strang's letter to the Foreign Office of July 20, 1939. He said that at the point that had been reached in the negotiations Britain had several alternatives before her. "We might accept the Soviet view about the inseparability of the political and military agreements and break on the definition of indirect aggression or we might accept the Soviet definition of indirect aggression and break on Article 6 (on the simultaneous entry into force of the political and military agreements) or we might accept neither and break on both." Strang pointed out that the negotiations on the military part of the agreement would be a very difficult matter and might drag on for months without any concrete agreement being reached. "Whether the continuance of this indeterminate situation would be better for us than a final breakdown of the negotiations now," he wrote, "is a matter of high policy, but I think myself that it would. A break would create bad feeling. It would encourage the Germans to act. It might drive the Soviet Union into isolation or into composition with Germany. On the other hand, the fact that military conversations were in progress, although producing no immediate concrete results, would still probably worry Hitler. Russia would also be less likely to remain neutral" (*Documents on British Foreign Policy. 1919-1939, Third Series, Vol. VI, pp. 423-426*).

Thus, Strang felt it was better to preserve the "indeterminate situation," that is, to continue the "talks for the sake of talks" than to break off the Anglo-Franco-Soviet negotiations.

133. As is now known from published documents, in the summer of 1939 secret Anglo-German talks were conducted to which the British Government attached incomparably greater importance than to the negotiations with the Soviet Union (see Documents Nos. 379, 383 and 391).

While conducting talks in London with Hitler's emissary, Wohlthat, the British Government was also making a considerable effort to settle Anglo-German differences through the Swedish mediators, Wenner-Gren and Dahlerus (*Documents on British Foreign Policy. 1919-1939, Third Series, Vol. VI, pp. 483-484, 737-742, 760*).

In late July 1939 a prominent British newspaper publisher, Lord Kemsley, visited Germany where he had had confidential conversations with several influential Nazis. As Kemsley related to Dirksen on August 2, 1939, "he was able", in a long talk with Hitler, "to give a detailed account of the British point of view" and he "agreed with the Führer that there exists dangerous tension and that attempts should be made to eliminate it" (*Documents and Materials Relating to the Eve of the Second World War, Vol. II, p. 129*).

It will be seen therefore that the British Government sought to use every possible avenue in order to come to terms with Nazi Germany.

134. On July 22, 1939 the Japanese Foreign Minister, Arita, and the British Ambassador in Tokyo, Craigie, exchanged notes formalizing an agreement which has come to be known as the Arita-Craigie Agreement and which represents one of the most shameful pages in the history of British diplomacy. This Agreement laid the foundations for the settlement of the Tientsin conflict (see Note 128) and formed part of the policy of a "Far Eastern Munich". It was announced by Chamberlain in the House of Commons on July 24, 1939. The Agreement read: "His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom fully recognize the actual situation in China, where hostilities on a large scale are in progress and note that, as long as that state of affairs continues to exist, the Japanese forces in China have special requirements for the purpose of safeguarding their own security and maintaining public order in regions under

their control, and that they have to suppress or remove any such acts or causes as will obstruct them or benefit their enemy. His Majesty's Government have no intention of countenancing any acts or measures prejudicial to the attainment of the above-mentioned objects by Japanese forces and they will take this opportunity to confirm their policy in this respect by making it plain to British authorities and British nationals in China that they should refrain from such acts and measures" (*Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939*, Third Series, Vol. IX, p. 313).

The British Government thus recognized the Japanese occupiers as the legitimate authority on the Chinese territory they had seized.

Furthermore, at a time when Japan was conducting military action against the USSR and the MPR in the area of Khalkhin Gol river, the Arita-Craigie Agreement strengthened Japan's hand and, in particular, the position of the Japanese forces in China, that is, in that area from which they were operating against the USSR and the MPR. Despite the fact that Anglo-Franco-Soviet talks on co-operation in the struggle against aggression were under way at the time, the British ruling circles, by concluding an agreement with the Japanese, were in effect giving support to the Japanese aggressors who were carrying on military operations against the USSR and the MPR.

135. From July 17 to 19, 1939 General Ironside, the Inspector-General of British Overseas Forces, who was responsible among other things for co-operation with allied military staffs, was in Poland on an official visit. The purpose of the visit was "to discuss the present military situation with the Polish General Staff and to obtain from them some indication of the measures they proposed to take in certain eventualities" (*Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939*, Third Series, Vol. VI, p. 274).

In Warsaw Ironside met with several high-ranking military men and ministers; he also had a long talk with Marshal Smigly-Rydz, who was actually the dictator of Poland. In Ironside's view the Polish Army was well trained, but underequipped (*Ibid.*, p. 486). In this connection he advised the British Government to speed up the Anglo-Polish negotiations on a loan to Poland to improve the equipment of her army. These measures would, he felt, enable the Polish forces "to hold a German attack as long as possible" and thereby "save British lives" (*Ibid.*, p. 379). At the same time Ironside intimated to the Poles that Britain did not want to become involved in a world war over minor incidents in Danzig or on the German-Polish frontier and he emphasized that it was necessary to study the circumstances in which the British guarantee to Poland might be applicable (*Ibid.*, p. 416).

Ironside thereby plainly warned the Poles that the British Government did not consider itself to be obliged automatically to come to Poland's aid if she was in conflict with Germany, and that it reserved the right to decide whether or not Poland's entry into war with Germany was sufficiently well justified and whether or not Britain was obliged to give her aid.

136. In giving the gist of Buxton's proposal, the German Ambassador in Britain, Dirksen, pointed out in a memorandum which he prepared in August-September 1939, that as compared with Wilson, Buxton "laid greater emphasis on the political aspect of an Anglo-German reconciliation than on the economic aspect" (*Documents and Materials Relating to the Eve of the Second World War*, Vol. II, pp. 218-219).

Thus, some prominent representatives of the Labour Opposition were as anxious as the Conservative Government headed by Chamberlain to strike a bargain with Nazi Germany at the expense of other nations.

137. The Anglo-French draft definition of the term "indirect aggression" still left open the question of when the guarantees of the three Powers to other States began to operate.

While saying that they understood the well-founded apprehensions of the Soviet Government about indirect aggression by Germany in the Baltic region, the British Government was in no hurry to reach an early settlement of this

- question. In his instructions to Seeds, the British Ambassador in Moscow, Halifax wrote on July 28, 1939, that since it had been decided to begin military talks, "there is no danger now of an imminent breakdown during the next critical weeks". In these altered circumstances, Halifax said, we feel that "we can afford to take a somewhat stiffer line" in regard to the question of defining indirect aggression. In this connection Halifax asked Seeds not to depart in subsequent talks from the substance of the British definition of indirect aggression contained in the proposal of July 8, 1939 (see Document 366) (*Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939*, Third Series, Vol. VI, p. 525).
138. In his articles Déat opposed French assistance to Poland. After the fall of France in 1940 he collaborated with the Nazi occupiers. Towards the end of the war he fled from France. In 1945 a French court tried him *in absentia* and sentenced him to death.
139. In describing Britain's position at the secret Anglo-German talks in London in the summer of 1939, the German Ambassador in Britain, Dirksen, said in a memorandum which he drew up later that the initiator of the talks was one of Chamberlain's closest advisers, Wilson, who "elaborated a programme for a broad settlement of Anglo-German relations".
 "The Programme," Dirksen wrote, "provided for agreements of a political, military and economic nature."
 "In the political field provision was made for a non-aggression pact incorporating the renunciation of the principle of aggression. The underlying purpose of this treaty was to give the British an opportunity gradually to free themselves from their obligations to Poland on the grounds that with the signing of the treaty Germany would have gone on record as renouncing the methods of aggression."
 "This was to be followed by a non-intervention treaty which was to a certain extent to serve as a cover for delimiting the spheres of interest of the great powers."
 "In the military sphere, provision was made for negotiations to conclude an agreement on the limitation of armaments on land, sea and in the air."
 "In the economic sphere, far-reaching proposals were made: negotiations were envisaged on colonial matters, on the supply of raw materials to Germany, on the division of industrial markets, on international debts, and on the application of the most-favoured-nation clause."
 "The significance of Wilson's proposals was proved," Dirksen wrote, "by the fact that Wilson suggested to Wohlthat that he obtain their confirmation from Chamberlain personally" (*Documents and Materials Relating to the Eve of the Second World War*, Vol. II, pp. 215-216).
140. Reporting on the composition of the Soviet Military Delegation, the French Military Attaché in the USSR, Palasse, wrote to the French War Minister, on August 7, 1939: "The fact that the Mission includes the People's Commissar for Defence of the USSR and the People's Commissar for the Navy, the Chief of Staff and his deputy, and the commander of the Soviet Air Force shows the great importance which the Soviet Government attaches to these talks."
141. On August 11, 1939, before his conversation with Hitler, Italian Foreign Minister Ciano met with German Foreign Minister Ribbentrop at Salzburg. They discussed the question of war preparations and the co-ordination of policies towards Britain, France and Poland. Ribbentrop made no secret of Germany's intentions to "solve" the Polish question in the most immediate future. At one point Ciano asked: "What do you want: the Corridor or Danzig?" Ribbentrop replied: "Neither, not any more. We want war" (M. Freund, *Geschichte des Zweiten Weltkrieges in Dokumenten*. Bd. III, Freiburg, 1956, S. 26).
 Besides their conversation on August 12, part of which is cited in this book, Hitler and Ciano met again on August 13 for talks. In that meeting Hitler emphasized that every successful individual action by one of the Axis partners was tantamount not only to a strategic but also, above all, to a

psychological strengthening of the other partner and of the whole Axis. He was thereby referring to aggressive actions by both Germany and Italy (the seizure of Austria, Czechoslovakia, Abyssinia, Albania, etc.). In Hitler's view, this strengthening of the Axis Powers was of the greatest importance "for the inevitable clash with the Western Powers" (*Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945*, Series D, Vol. VII, pp. 54-55).

At this time Italy was not very enthusiastic about a possible German war with Britain and France which could be precipitated by a German attack on Poland, because Italy had not yet concluded her preparations for war. However, for the purpose of bringing pressure to bear on Britain and France, the final communique on Ciano's meeting with Hitler and Ribbentrop at Salzburg noted that "totalitarian friendship and common preparedness prevail between the Axis Powers".

142. On July 25, 1939 the British Government finally accepted the Soviet proposal to begin talks for the conclusion of an Anglo-Franco-Soviet military agreement. Announcing this to the Soviet Ambassador in London, Halifax said that the British military mission could leave for Moscow within seven or ten days but that its composition had not yet been decided upon (see Document No. 384). The French Foreign Ministry notified the Soviet Embassy in Paris on July 26 that the French Military Delegation would be leaving for Moscow "within the next few days".

However, it was only on August 11 that the British and French military representatives arrived in Moscow.

The French Military Delegation included General Doumenc, General Valin, Captain Willaume, Commandant Krebs, Captain Beaufré, Captain Soviche, Captain de Willcot de Rinquese, and also the Military Attaché in Moscow, General Palasse, the Assistant Military Attaché in Moscow, Lieutenant-Colonel Abraham, and the Air Attaché, Lieutenant-Colonel Luguet.

The British Delegation included Admiral Reginald Plunkett-Erle-Drax, Air Marshal Ch. Burnett, Major-General Heywood, Colonel Davidson, Wing Commander Colyer, Commander Robertshaw, Captain Colman, and also the Naval Attaché, Captain Clanchy, the Military Attaché in Moscow, Colonel Firebrace, and the Air Attaché, Wing Commander Hallawell.

Referring to the composition of the French Delegation the Soviet Ambassador in France wrote to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs that the French Government had obviously set "a modest task". He also noted the following: "That it mainly consists of specialists testifies to the inspection purposes of the Delegation as well, i.e. to their intention, above all, to find out the state our army is in" (Soviet Foreign Policy Archives).

Commenting on the composition of the British Delegation, the Soviet Ambassador in Britain wrote to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs: "I feel that, judging by the nature of their official posts, the members of the Delegation will not be able to decide anything on the spot and will refer everything back to London. It is also suspicious, and here I am again basing my judgement on the nature of their posts, that the members of the Delegation can stay on in Moscow indefinitely. This does not seem to hold out much promise that the military talks would proceed rapidly" (Soviet Foreign Policy Archives).

On July 26, 1939, the British Government discussed the basic tasks of the British Military Mission to Moscow. The record of the meeting said: "There was general agreement with the view that our representatives should be instructed to proceed very slowly with the conversations until a political pact had been concluded." The British Government decided that the talks should not be commenced with the presentation to the Soviet Government of information as to British plans but that an effort should be made to ensure that "the Russians let our representatives know what they could do to help e.g. Poland" (*Public Record Office*. CAB. 39/39, p. 225).

This attitude of the British Government was also reflected in the brief which was given to the British Military Delegation. It emphasized that the delegation should "go very slowly with the conversations". "The British Go-

vernment," the brief said, "is unwilling to enter into any detailed commitments which are likely to tie our hands in all circumstances. Endeavours should therefore be made to confine the Military Agreement to the broadest possible terms. Something on the lines of an agreed statement of policy may meet the case."

"If the Russians propose that the British and French Governments should communicate to the Polish, Rumanian or Baltic States proposals involving co-operation with the Soviet Government or General Staff, the Delegation should not commit themselves but refer home. The Delegation should not discuss the defence of the Baltic States, since neither Great Britain nor France have guaranteed these States" (*Documents on British Foreign Policy. 1919-1939, Third Series, Vol. VI, pp. 763-764*).

From the start of the talks of the Military Missions it became clear that the British and French Governments did not really want to co-operate with the USSR. The fact that it had taken the Missions 17 days to get to Moscow, that they were made up of minor officials, and that the British Military Delegation was not empowered to conclude a military agreement and not even to conduct negotiations, could not but give rise to doubts as to the sincerity of the intentions of the British and French Governments. These doubts grew still stronger when it became known that the British and French Military Missions did not have even a preliminary military plan for joint operations against a common enemy. Thus, the very first meetings of the Military Missions showed that the British and French Governments did not take a serious attitude to the talks with the USSR. They confirmed once again that Britain and France were more interested in talks about talks than in arriving at an understanding with the Soviet Union on co-operation between them against the fascist aggressors.

143. In his telegram to Halifax sent after this meeting Seeds wrote that the "Russians have now raised fundamental problem on which military talks will succeed or fail and which has indeed been at the bottom of all our difficulties since the very beginning of political conversations, namely, how to reach any useful agreement with the Soviet Union so long as this country's neighbours maintain a sort of boycott", which may be terminated only "when it is too late". As we have taken engagements with regard to Poland and Rumania, Seeds went on, the Soviet Delegation "are justified in putting on Great Britain and France the onus of approaching those countries" (*Documents on British Foreign Policy. 1919-1939, Third Series, Vol. VII, p. 1*).

144. On August 11, 1939, the League of Nations High Commissioner in Danzig, Burckhardt, visited Hitler at the latter's residence at Obersalzberg.

In his conversation with Burckhardt, Hitler, seeking to neutralize Britain and France in connection with the attack on Poland which he was planning, declared: "Above all I want nothing from the West. Not today and not tomorrow. I want nothing from the densely populated regions of the world... But I must have a free hand in the East. Once more it is a question of grain, and timber (which I can only find outside Europe) in sufficient quantity... I want to live in peace with England and to conclude a definitive pact; to guarantee all the English possessions in the world and to collaborate."

Burckhardt offered Hitler his services as a mediator for arranging Anglo-German contacts. In this connection Hitler expressed his readiness to meet with a British representative who could speak fluent German, for instance, General Ironside.

Burckhardt assured Hitler that London and Paris were continually exercising a moderating influence on Warsaw on the question of Danzig (*Documents on British Foreign Policy. 1919-1939, Third Series, Vol. VI, pp. 693-696*).

145. The "shock" which the Ambassador referred to was caused by the following communique which appeared on August 22, 1939, in the Soviet press: "After the conclusion of the Soviet-German trade and credit agreement, the question arose of the improvement of political relations between Germany and the USSR. In an exchange of views on this question between the German and So-

viet Governments it became clear that both Sides desired to ease the tension in the political relations between them, to avert the danger of war, and to conclude a Pact of Non-Aggression. In connection with this matter the German Minister for Foreign Affairs, Herr von Ribbentrop, will arrive in Moscow in a few days for talks" (*Izvestia*, August 22, 1939).

146. Actually, on August 19 Polish Foreign Minister Beck, acting on the instructions of Marshal Smigly-Rydz, gave French Ambassador Noël a negative reply to the enquiry about the possibility of the passage of Soviet troops through Polish territory, declaring that the Poles "cannot discuss in any form the question of foreign troops using a part of their national territory".

On August 23, after the announcement of Ribbentrop's forthcoming visit to Moscow and after a new démarche by the French Ambassador in Warsaw, undertaken at the insistence of the French Government, Beck gave his consent to Doumenc issuing the following vague statement in Moscow: "We have learnt for certain that in the event of common action against German aggression collaboration, under technical conditions to be settled subsequently between Poland and USSR, is not excluded. French and British General Staffs consider all hypotheses of such collaboration should be immediately examined" (*Documents on British Foreign Policy. 1919-1939*, Third Series, Vol. VII, p. 150).

In this way a super-diplomatic formula had been invented so that the British and French Governments could try to continue the hopeless talks in Moscow. In fact, however, it was clear from this statement that, as hitherto, no agreement could be reached on genuine co-operation in the struggle against aggression. Indeed, the statement said nothing about Poland agreeing to co-operate with the USSR. It had set out, not the position of Poland, but only what amounted to "an opinion" of the British and French Military Missions—and this "opinion" was a deliberate falsehood for in reality they knew that Poland did not agree to co-operate with the USSR.

147. Of interest in this connection are the records of British Cabinet meetings which have recently been made public. They show that the British ruling circles wanted to come to terms with Hitler at any price, disregarding the vital interests of Poland. Previously, in a conversation with German Ambassador, Dirksen, Chamberlain's adviser, Wilson, had pointed out, as Dirksen subsequently reported, that "with the conclusion of an Anglo-German Entente the British policy of guarantees will in fact be terminated. An agreement with Germany will give Britain a chance to be freed from her obligations to Poland on the grounds that the non-aggression agreement would protect Poland from a German attack; in this way England would be completely released from her obligations. Then Poland would, so to say, be left alone face to face with Germany" (*Documents and Materials Relating to the Eve of the Second World War*, Vol. II, p. 220).

On August 2, 1939, in explaining the British position, Halifax told a British Cabinet meeting that the seizure of Danzig by the Nazis "should not be regarded as providing a *casus belli*" (*Public Record Office*, CAB. 40/39, p. 277). The British Government thus frankly admitted that Britain did not intend to come to Poland's assistance if a war should break out between Poland and Germany over Danzig.

"The real value of our guarantee to Poland," declared the British Ambassador in Berlin, Henderson, at a Cabinet meeting on August 26, "was to enable Poland to come to a negotiated settlement with Germany" (*Public Record Office*, CAB. 43/39, p. 379). Henderson suggested bringing new pressure to bear on Poland so that she would "be made to understand what is at stake for her" (*Documents on British Foreign Policy. 1919-1939*, Third Series, Vol. VII, p. 235).

The British Government once again considered the possibility of accepting Hitler's offer for a "settlement" of the question of Danzig and the Corridor, that is, for their "peaceful" transfer to Germany, although the proposal of the Hitlerites on this question had been rejected by the Poles (*Public Record Of-*

face, CAB, 43/39, p. 380). On August 27, at a Cabinet meeting Halifax spoke in favour of direct talks between Germany and Poland, saying: "We were anxious to reach a settlement with Germany." At the same meeting Chamberlain admitted that he had already made it plain to the Swedish industrialist Dahlerus (through whom the secret Anglo-German talks had been conducted) that the Poles could concede Danzig to the Germans (*Public Record Office*, CAB. 44/39, pp. 399, 401) although there had been no consultations between Britain and Poland on this subject. Moreover, the British Government tried to avoid discussing such matters with Poland as it believed, and correctly so, that this might "involve some risk of loss of confidence" in Britain on the part of the Poles (*Public Record Office*, CAB. 42/39, p. 354).

148. By concluding the Treaty of Non-Aggression with Germany, the Soviet Union prevented at that time not only a war with Germany but also an attack by Japan. As the British Ambassador in Tokyo, Craigie, reported to London, the signing of the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact "has been for Japanese a severe shock" (*Documents on British Foreign Policy. 1919-1939*, Third Series, Vol. IX, p. 495).

The Japanese Government lodged a protest with Germany in connection with the conclusion of the Soviet-German Treaty, pointing out that the Treaty ran counter to the Anti-Comintern Pact (see Note 24). The Japanese War Ministry told the Italian Attaché in Tokyo, Scalise, that the signing of the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact was "a betrayal of German-Japanese friendship and the idea of the Anti-Comintern Pact" (*Documents on German Foreign Policy. 1918-1945*, Series D, Vol. VII, p. 224).

On August 28, 1939, the Japanese Cabinet headed by Hiranuma, which had been eager to bring about a war jointly conducted by Japan and Germany against the USSR, was compelled to resign. In explaining his resignation, Hiranuma said that as a result of the Soviet-German Treaty a new situation had developed which necessitated "a completely new orientation of Japanese foreign policy".

149. A reference to Hitler's letter to Chamberlain transmitted on August 25, 1939, through the British Ambassador in Berlin, Henderson.

This letter was a reply to Chamberlain's message to Hitler of August 22 in which the British Prime Minister referred to the British obligations to Poland (see Document No. 201) and called for a restoration of a situation of confidence "to enable discussions to be carried on in an atmosphere different from that which prevails today". Chamberlain also proposed that the two countries "discuss the wider problems affecting the future of international relations", including matters of interest to Great Britain and Germany (*Documents on British Foreign Policy. 1919-1939*, Third Series, Vol. VII, pp. 127-128).

In handing over his reply, Hitler, who was still seeking to secure Britain's neutralization in connection with the attack on Poland which he was then planning, told the British Ambassador that he had always wanted to have good relations with Great Britain. He requested the Ambassador personally to inform the British Government that Germany wanted an agreement with Great Britain. Hitler advanced the following conditions for this: Germany's colonial demands must be met and her obligations to her allies must not be affected. If these conditions were met Hitler said he would be ready to conclude an agreement with Britain and to guarantee the integrity of the British Empire. Hitler declared that he would be ready to accept "a reasonable limitation of armaments" and that "a frontier modification in the West does not enter into consideration". "Western fortifications, which have been constructed at a cost of milliards," he assured the British, "was final Reich frontier on the West" (*Ibid.*, pp. 227-229).

On August 25, Henderson wrote to British Foreign Secretary Halifax that he regarded this statement as an indication that "Herr Hitler still desires to avoid world war" (*Ibid.*, p. 235).

At the same time the British Government was using various other official

and unofficial channels to carry on negotiations with the Nazis in the hope of reaching a compromise with them at the expense of the Polish and other peoples of Eastern Europe. On August 25 there was another meeting between the representative of Swedish business circles, Dahlerus, and Goering during which Dahlerus was told of the German "conditions" for an agreement with Britain. On August 26 British Foreign Secretary Halifax transmitted, again through Dahlerus, his reply to Goering in which he said: "We shall endeavour to preserve the same spirit as the Führer has shown; namely, a desire to find a satisfactory solution of the questions now causing anxiety" (*Ibid.*, p. 283).

The British Government was conducting active talks with the Government of fascist Italy, seeking to use the latter as an intermediary to achieve agreement between Great Britain and Germany. On August 27, in a telephone conversation with Italian Foreign Minister Ciano, Halifax assured him: "We shall certainly not refuse to discuss with Germany" (*Ibid.*, p. 302).

On August 28 Chamberlain sent Hitler a new message in which he declared that he fully shared the desire of the Reich Chancellor "to make friendship the basis of the relations between Germany and the British Empire". But at this point he could no longer avoid reaffirming Britain's readiness to render assistance to Poland in the event of a military conflict. Referring to Hitler's proposals, Chamberlain wrote: "His Majesty's Government are fully prepared to take them, with some additions, as subjects for discussion, and they would be ready, if the differences between Germany and Poland are peacefully composed, to proceed as soon as practicable to such discussion with a sincere desire to reach agreement" (*Ibid.*, pp. 330-332).

In handing Hitler Chamberlain's message, British Ambassador Henderson stated: "The Prime Minister could carry through his policy of an understanding, if, but only if, Herr Hitler was prepared to co-operate" (*Ibid.*, pp. 351-354).

On the following day, August 29, in his reply to this message Hitler demanded the transfer to Germany of Danzig and the Corridor, and also the safeguarding of the rights of the German national minority in Poland. The message emphasized that although the German Government doubted that the outcome of the negotiations with the Polish Government would be successful, it was nonetheless prepared to accept the English proposal and enter into direct discussions with Poland. It was doing so solely because of the impression made upon it by the "written statement" about the British Government's desire to conclude a "pact of friendship" with Germany (*Ibid.*, pp. 388-390).

On August 30, when it became known that Germany had concentrated 46 divisions on her Eastern frontier and intended to strike at Poland within the next few days, a British Cabinet meeting decided that "these military concentrations afforded no valid argument against further negotiations with the German Government" (*Public Record Office*, CAB. 46/39, p. 423).

Chamberlain's attempts to reach agreement with Hitler yielded no results, however; nor, indeed, could they. Hitler was negotiating with Britain for the sole purpose of localizing the war he was preparing against Poland. He had no intention of reaching agreement with her. On the contrary, after the rout of Poland Hitler intended to start a war against none other than Britain and France.

150. A reference to the Protocol of Mutual Assistance signed by the Soviet Union and the Mongolian People's Republic on March 12, 1936. Under the Protocol the Governments of the USSR and the MPR, prompted by the relations of friendship between the two States and also by their desire "to uphold the cause of peace in the Far East," undertook "in the event of a military attack on either of the contracting Parties to render each other all manner of assistance, including military assistance" (*Pravda*, April 8, 1936).

Index of Names*

A

- Abe, N.*—General, Prime Minister of Japan, Aug. 1939-Jan. 1940.
Alexander, A.—Labour Member of British Parliament.
Alexandrovsky S. S.—Soviet Ambassador in Czechoslovakia.
Amery, L.—British Conservative politician and statesman.
Anfuso, F.—Chef de Cabinet of Italian Foreign Minister.
Apaydin, Z.—Turkish Ambassador in the USSR.
Aras, T.—Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs, 1925-38; Ambassador in Britain, 1939-42.
Arciszewski, M.—Polish Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs.
Arita, H.—Japanese Minister for Foreign Affairs, 1938-39.
Arnal, P.—Head of League of Nations Section in French Foreign Ministry.
Arpag, H.—Turkish Ambassador in Germany.
Astakhov, G. A.—Counsellor, Chargé d'Affaires of the USSR in Germany.
Ataturk, K.—President of Turkey, 1923-38.
Atlee, C.—Leader of the British Labour Party.
Attolico, B.—Italian Ambassador in Germany.
Avenol, J.—Secretary-General of the League of Nations.

B

- Baldwin, S.*—British Prime Minister, 1935-37.
Ball, G.—British Conservative Party personality.
Baudouin, P.—Director of the *Banque de l'Indo-Chine* in Paris.
Beaufré, A.—Captain, French Army General Staff.
Beaverbrook—British newspaper proprietor, prominent Conservative Party personality.
Beck, J.—Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs.
Benes, E.—President of Czechoslovakia, Dec. 1935-Oct. 1938.

* The Index provides data mainly relating to 1938-39.

- Beran, R.*—President of Czechoslovak National Council, Dec. 1938-Mar. 1939.
Biddle, A.—US Ambassador in Poland.
Billotte, P.—member of French Supreme Council for National Defence.
Biryukov, N. I.—member of War Council of Front Group of Soviet and Mongolian Forces in the MPR in 1939.
Blum, L.—President of the French Council of Ministers, Mar.-Apr. 1938; leader of the French Socialist Party.
Blyukher, U. K.—Marshal of the Soviet Union, Commander of the Special Far Eastern Army.
Bonnet, G.—French Minister for Foreign Affairs; member of the Radical Socialist Party.
Bratianu, G.—leader of the Rumanian National-Liberal Party.
Brauchitsch, W.—Commander-in-Chief of the German Army.
Brinon, F.—Editor-in-Chief of *l'Information*, Vice-President of the France-Germany society.
Bujoiu, M.—Rumanian Economics Minister.
Bullitt, W.—US Ambassador in France.
Burckhardt, C.—League of Nations High Commissioner in Danzig.
Buret, E.—French journalist.
Burgin, L.—British Minister of Transport, 1937-39; Minister of Supply, July 1939-May 1940.
Burnett, Ch.—Air Marshal, member of British Military Mission at negotiations between the Military Missions of the USSR, Britain and France in Moscow in 1939.
Butler, R. A.—British Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.
Buxton, R.—prominent British Labour Party member.

C

- Cadogan, A.*—British Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.
Campinchi, C.—French Minister of Marine.
Carol II—King of Rumania.
Chamberlain, N.—Prime Minister of Great Britain.
Cherny, I. I.—Soviet Air Attaché in Britain.
Chiang Kai-shek—Commander-in-Chief of the Chinese Armed Forces, Head of the Kuomintang.
Christic, B.—Yugoslav Minister in Italy.
Churchill, W.—prominent British Conservative Party personality.
Chvalkovsky, F.—Czechoslovak Minister for Foreign Affairs, Oct. 1938-Mar. 1939.
Ciano, G.—Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs.
Cinkar-Markovic, A.—Yugoslav Minister for Foreign Affairs, Feb. 1939-Mar. 1941.
Clemenceau, G.—President of the French Council of Ministers 1906-9; 1917-20.
Clodius, K.—Deputy Head of the Economic Policy Department of the German Foreign Ministry.
Colson, L.—General, member of the French Supreme Council of National Defence.
Comert, P.—Head of the American Department of the French Foreign Ministry.
Constantinescu, M.—Rumanian Economics Minister, Mar. 1938-Jan. 1939; Finance Minister, from Feb. 1939.
Corbin, C.—French Ambassador in Britain.
Coulondre, R.—French Ambassador in the USSR, 1936-38; Ambassador in Germany, Nov. 1938-Sept. 1939.
Craigie, R.—British Ambassador in Japan.
Cripps, S.—British Labour Party personality.
Csaky, I.—Hungarian Minister for Foreign Affairs.
Curtius, J.—German Minister for Foreign Affairs, 1929-31.

D

- Daladier, E.*—President of the French Council of Ministers and Minister of War.
Dalton, H.—British Labour Party personality.
Daranyi, K.—Hungarian Prime Minister, Oct. 1936-May 1938.
Davaz, S.—Turkish Ambassador in France.
Davies, J.—US Ambassador in the USSR, 1936-38; Ambassador in Belgium, 1938-40.
Déat, M.—member of the French National Assembly.
De la Baume—Head of Economic Department of the French Foreign Ministry.
De la Warr—British Lord Privy Seal, May 1937-Oct. 1938.
Dianu, N.—Rumanian Minister in the USSR.
Dieckhoff, H.—German Ambassador in the United States.
Dies, M.—member of US House of Representatives, Chairman of the House Un-American Activities Committee.
Dirksen, H.—German Ambassador in Britain.
Doumenc, J.—General, Head of French Military Mission at negotiations between the Military Missions of the USSR, Britain and France in Moscow in 1939.
Drax, P.—Admiral, Head of British Military Mission at negotiations between the Military Missions of the USSR, Britain and France in Moscow in 1939.
Drummond-Wolff, H.—Conservative member of the British Parliament.
Duff-Cooper, A.—First Lord of the Admiralty, 1937-38.
Dunn, J.—Adviser on Political Relations in the US State Department.

E

- Eden, A.*—British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Dec. 1935-Feb. 1938; member of the Conservative Party.
Eenpalu, K.—Prime Minister of Estonia.
Erdmannsdorff, O.—German Minister in Hungary.
Erkko, E.—Finnish Minister for Foreign Affairs.

F

- Fabricius, W.*—German Minister in Rumania.
Faure, P.—a leader of the French Socialist Party.
Fierlinger, Z.—Czechoslovak Minister in the USSR.
Flandin, P.—French Prime Minister, 1934-35; Minister for Foreign Affairs, 1936.
Franassovici, R.—Rumanian Ambassador in Poland.
Franco, F.—Spanish General who led the 1936 rebellion against the Spanish Republican Government.
François-Poncet, A.—French Ambassador in Germany, 1931-38; Ambassador in Italy, 1938-40.
Freycinet, C.—French statesman, late 19th-early 20th cent.
Funk, W.—German Minister of Economics.

G

- Gafencu, G.*—Rumanian Minister for Foreign Affairs.
Gamelin, M.—General, Chief of French General Staff.
Gayda, R.—Leader of the Czechoslovak Fascist Party.
Generalov, N. I.—Chargé d'Affaires of the USSR in Japan.

- Gerstenberg, A.*—German Air Attaché in Poland.
Giorgis, G.—Italian Naval Attaché in Japan.
Girard, J.—French military leader in the First World War.
Giraud, A.—General, member of the French Supreme National Defence Council.
Goebbels, J.—German Minister for Propaganda.
Goering, H.—Commander-in-Chief of the German Air Force and Minister for Air; Commissioner for the Four-Year Plan.
Greenwood, A.—Labour Member of the British Parliament.
Greiser, A.—President of the Danzig Senate.
Grew, J.—US Ambassador in Japan.
Grzybowski, W.—Polish Ambassador in the USSR.

H

- Hacha, E.*—President of Czechoslovakia, Nov. 1938-Mar. 1939.
Halder, F.—General, Chief of German General Staff.
Halifax, E.—British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.
Heeren, U.—German Minister in Yugoslavia.
Henderson, N.—British Ambassador in Germany.
Herriot, E.—President of the French Chamber of Deputies, member of the Radical Socialist Party.
Hetzler—Official of Ribbentrop's Secretariat.
Hewel, W.—Permanent Liaison Officer of the German Foreign Ministry attached to the Reich Chancellor.
Heywood, T.—Major-General, member of the British Military Mission at negotiations between the Military Missions of the USSR, Britain and France in Moscow in 1939.
Himer, K.—German Military Attaché in Poland.
Himmler, H.—Reichsfuehrer of the SS and Chief of Police of Nazi Germany.
Hiranuma, K.—Prime Minister of Japan, Jan.—Aug. 1939.
Hitler, A.—Reich Chancellor of Germany, 1933-45; leader of German fascists.
Hlinka, A.—Chairman of Slovak People's Party.
Hoare, R.—British Minister in Rumania.
Hoare, S.—British Secretary of State for the Home Department.
Hodza, M.—Prime Minister of Czechoslovakia, Nov. 1935-Sept. 1938.
Hoover, H.—US President, 1929-33.
Hoppenot, M.—Head of Far Eastern Department in French Foreign Ministry, 1938; Head of European Department, 1939.
Hore-Belisha, L.—British Secretary of State for War.
Hornbeck, S.—Adviser on Political Relations, US State Department.
Horthy, M.—Admiral, Regent of Hungary.
Howard, R.—American journalist and publisher.
Hudson, R.—Parliamentary Secretary, British Department of Overseas Trade.
Hull, C.—US Secretary of State.
Husarek—General, Czechoslovak representative on the Sub-Committee of the International Commission for the Implementation of the Munich Agreement which met in Berlin.
Hu Shih—Chinese Ambassador in the United States, 1938-42.

I

- Imredy, B.*—Hungarian Prime Minister, May 1938-Feb. 1939.
Inonu, Ismet—President of Turkey, 1938-50.
Inskip, T.—British Minister for Co-ordination of Defence, Mar. 1936-Jan. 1939.

- Ironsides, E.*—British General, Governor and Commander-in-Chief at Gibraltar, 1938-39; Inspector-General of Overseas Forces, 1939.
Ismay, H.—Secretary of the British Committee of Imperial Defence.
Itagaki, S.—General, Japanese Minister for War.

J

- Jacomoni, F.*—Italian Minister in Albania.
Jazdzewski, A.—Counsellor of the Polish Embassy in Britain.
Jeanneney, J.—President of the French Senate.
Johnson, H.—US Chargé d'Affaires in Britain.
Jungerth-Arnothy, M.—Hungarian Minister in the USSR.

K

- Kalinin, M. I.*—Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR.
Karszo-Siedlewski, J.—Polish Minister in Iran.
Kaya, Sukru—Turkish Minister of Internal Affairs.
Keitel, W.—General, Chief of High Command of the German Armed Forces.
Kennard, H.—British Ambassador in Poland.
Kennedy, J.—US Ambassador in Britain.
Kérillis, H.—French Deputy and journalist.
Kido, K.—Japanese Minister of Welfare, 1938-39; Minister for Home Affairs, 1939.
Kiosseivanoff, G.—Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria.
Kirk, A.—Counsellor, US Chargé d'Affaires in the USSR.
Kleist, E.—Official of Ribbentrop's Secretariat.
Kobylanski, M.—Vice-Director of the Political Department of the Polish Foreign Ministry.
Koc, A.—Colonel, Head of the Polish Economic Mission to Great Britain in the summer of 1939.
Kocins, F.—Latvian Minister in the USSR.
Konoze, F.—Japanese Prime Minister, June 1937-Jan. 1939.
Koo, Wellington—Chinese Ambassador in France.
Kordt, T.—Counsellor of the German Embassy in Britain.
Kovalev, A. S.—Soviet Naval Attaché in Japan.
Krapivintsev, P. N.—Counsellor of the Soviet Embassy in France.
Krebs—Commandant, member of French Military Mission at negotiations between the Military Missions of the USSR, Britain and France in Moscow in 1939.
Krofta, K.—Czechoslovak Minister for Foreign Affairs, 1935-Oct. 1938.
Kung Hsian-hsi—President of the Executive Yuan of China.
Kuznetsov, N. G.—People's Commissar for the Navy of the USSR, Fleet Commander II.

L

- La Follette, R.*—US Senator.
Lansdown—British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1900-1905.
Laval, P.—French Minister for Foreign Affairs, 1934-35; President of the Council, 1935-36.
Lebrun, A.—President of the French Republic.
Léger, A.—Secretary-General of the French Foreign Ministry.

- Leith-Ross, F.*—Chief Economic Adviser to the British Government.
Lipski, J.—Polish Ambassador in Germany.
Litauer—President of the Foreign Press Association in London.
Litvinov, M. M.—People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR, 1930-May 3, 1939.
Lloyd George, D.—British Prime Minister, 1916-22.
Loktionov, A. D.—Chief of the Red Army Air Force, Army Commander II.
Londonderry—Conservative Member of the British Parliament.
Lorraine, P.—British Ambassador in Italy, May 1939-June 1940.
Lozovsky S. A.—Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR, 1939-46.
Lozoraitis, S.—Lithuanian Minister for Foreign Affairs, 1935-38; official of the Foreign Ministry, 1939.
Lubienski, M.—*Chef de Cabinet* of the Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs.
Lukasiewicz, J.—Polish Ambassador in France.

M

- Macek, U.*—leader of the Croat Peasant Party.
Maisky I. M.—Soviet Ambassador in Britain.
Mandel, G.—French Minister for Colonies.
Mannerheim K.—Field-Marshal, President of the Finnish Council for National Defence.
Marin, L.—a leader of the *Union Républicaine Démocratique* in France.
Masaryk, J.—Czechoslovak Minister in Britain.
Mason-MacFarlane, F.—British Military Attaché in Germany.
Massigli, R.—French Ambassador in Turkey.
Mastny, U.—Czechoslovak Minister in Germany.
Matsudaira, T.—Minister of the Japanese Imperial Household.
Matzky, G.—German Military Attaché in Japan.
Menemencioglu, N.—Secretary-General of the Turkish Ministry for Foreign Affairs.
Metaxas, I.—Greek Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs.
Mikoyan A. I.—Deputy Chairman of the USSR Council of People's Commissars and People's Commissar for Foreign Trade.
Milch, E.—Colonel-General, Inspector-General of the German Air Force.
Mironas, U.—Lithuanian Prime Minister.
Mishin, L. A.—Acting Soviet Military Attaché in Japan.
Molotov, U. M.—Chairman of the USSR Council of People's Commissars, 1930-41; People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs from May 3, 1939.
Moltke, H.—German Ambassador in Poland.
Moore, A.—US Senator (Dem.), 1935-38.
Morgan, G.—Labour Member of the British Parliament.
Morrison, H.—a prominent member of the British Labour Party.
Munters, U.—Latvian Minister for Foreign Affairs.
Musse, F.—French Military Attaché in Poland.
Mussolini, B.—Italian Prime Minister, leader of the Italian fascists.

N

- Naggiar, P.*—French Ambassador in the USSR, Feb. 1939-40.
Negrin, J.—President of the Council of Ministers of Republican Spain.
Neumann, F.—leader of the Nazi organization of Klaipeda Germans.
Newton, B.—British Minister in Czechoslovakia, Mar. 1937-Apr. 1939.
Nikishev, M. S.—member of the War Council of the Soviet Army Group in the MPR, 1939.

- Nikitin, K. N.*—Soviet Ambassador in Estonia.
Nikitnikova, O. I.—Soviet Chargé d'Affaires in Turkey.
Noël, L.—French Ambassador in Poland.
Noel-Buxton, N.—prominent member of the the British Labour Party.
Norman, M.—Governor of the Bank of England.

O

- Ogilvie-Forbes, G.*—Counsellor of the British Embassy in Germany.
Oshima, H.—General, Japanese Ambassador in Germany.
Ott, E.—General, German Ambassador in Japan.

P

- Palasse*—French Military Attaché in the USSR.
Panyushkin, A. S.—Soviet Ambassador in China.
Papen, F.—German Ambassador in Turkey.
Patenotre, R.—French Economic Minister.
Päts, K.—President of Estonia.
Paul—Prince, Regent of Yugoslavia.
Payart, J.—French Chargé d'Affaires in the USSR.
Perth, E.—British Ambassador in Italy, Oct. 1933-Apr. 1939.
Pertinax—French Right-wing journalist.
Phipps, E.—British Ambassador in France.
Pilsudski, J.—Marshal; Polish Chief of State, 1918-22; Prime Minister, 1926-28 and 1930.
Pirow, O.—South African Minister of Defence.
Pittman, K.—Chairman of US Senate Foreign Relations Committee.
Potemkin, U. P.—Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR.
Potocky, J.—Polish Ambassador in the United States.
Prytz, B.—Swedish Minister in Britain.
Pung, M.—Chairman of the Estonian National Assembly.

Q

- Quo Tai-chi*—Chinese Ambassador in Britain.

R

- Raczynski, E.*—Polish Ambassador in Britain.
Raczynski, R.—Polish Ambassador in Rumania.
Raeder, E.—Admiral, Commander-in-Chief of the German Navy.
Ramzai—see Sorge, R.
Rei, A.—Estonian Minister in the USSR.
Revay, J.—Minister in the autonomous Government of the Carpatho-Ukraine, Oct. 1938-Mar. 1939.
Reynaud, P.—French Deputy President of the Council of Ministers and Minister of Justice, April-Nov. 1938; Minister of Finance, Nov. 1938-Mar. 1940.
Ribaud, A.—President of the French Council of Ministers, 1892-93 and 1895.
Ribbentrop, J.—German Minister for Foreign Affairs.
Romer, T.—Polish Ambassador in Japan.

- Roosevelt, F.*—President of the United States, 1933-45.
Rosenberg, A.—Chief of the Foreign Policy Service of the German National-Socialist Party.
Rosso, A.—Italian Ambassador in the USSR.
Runciman, W.—Head of British mediation mission to Czechoslovakia, 1938.
Rüter—Head of the British Section in the Economic Policy Department of the German Foreign Ministry.

S

- Saint-Hardouin, J.*—French Chargé d'Affaires in Germany.
Sakoh, S.—Japanese Ambassador in Poland.
Sarajoglu, S.—Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs.
Sarraut, A.—President of the French Council of Ministers, 1933 and 1936; member of the Radical Socialist Party.
Schacht, H.—President of the Reichsbank.
Scheliah, R.—Counsellor of the German Embassy in Poland.
Schmidt, P.—interpreter, member of the Secretariat of the German Foreign Minister.
Schmitt, K.—German Economics Minister, 1933-34.
Schnurre, J.—Head of Economic Policy Division IV (Eastern Europe) in the German Foreign Ministry.
Schulenburg, F.—German Ambassador in the USSR.
Seeds, W.—British Ambassador in the USSR.
Selter, K.—Estonian Minister for Foreign Affairs.
Selzam, E.—Counsellor of the German Embassy in Britain.
Shaposhnikov, B. M.—Chief of the General Staff of the Red Army, Army Commander I.
Shiratori, T.—Japanese Ambassador in Italy.
Shtein, B. E.—Soviet Ambassador in Italy.
Shtern, G. M.—Army Commander II, Commander of the Front Group of Soviet and Mongolian Forces in the MPR in 1939.
Simon, J.—British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1931-35; Chancellor of the Exchequer, 1937-40.
Sinclair, A.—prominent member of the British Liberal Party.
Slavescu, U.—Rumanian Minister for War Supply.
Smigly-Rydz, E.—Marshal, Inspector-General of the Polish Armed Forces, 1935-39.
Smorodinov, I. U.—Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the Red Army, Corps Commander.
Sorge, R. (Ramzai)—Soviet Military Intelligence officer in Japan.
Stachiewicz, W.—General, Chief of the General Staff of the Polish Armed Forces.
Stalin, J. V.—General Secretary of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik).
Stanley, O.—President of the British Board of Trade.
Steinhardt, L.—US Ambassador in the USSR.
Stelzer, G.—Counsellor of German Legation in Rumania.
Stoyadinovic, M.—Yugoslav Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs.
Strang, W.—Head of the Central Department, British Foreign Office; participant in Anglo-Franco-Soviet negotiations in Moscow in 1939.
Sun Fo—President of Chinese Legislative Yuan.
Surits, Ya. Z.—Soviet Ambassador in France.
Süsskind-Schwendi—official of German Economics Ministry.
Syrový, J.—Czechoslovak Prime Minister, Sept.-Nov. 1938.

T

- Tabouis, G.*—French journalist.
Tatarescu, G.—Rumanian Ambassador in France.
Terauchi, A.—General, member of the Japanese Supreme War Council.
Terentyev, A. U.—Soviet Ambassador in Turkey.
Tilea, U.—Rumanian Minister in Britain.
Toung, D.—Chinese Chargé d'Affaires in Turkey.
Troyanovsky, A. A.—Soviet Ambassador in the United States, 1933-38.

U

- Ugaki, K.*—General, Japanese Minister for Foreign Affairs, May-Sept. 1938.
Umansky, K. A.—Soviet Chargé d'Affaires in the United States, 1938-39; Ambassador in the United States, 1939-41.
Urbsys, J.—Lithuanian Minister for Foreign Affairs.

V

- Vainshtein, G. I.*—Head of the 2nd Western Department of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the USSR.
Valin, M.—General, member of the French Military Mission at negotiations between the Military Missions of the USSR, Britain and France in Moscow in 1939.
Vansittart, R.—British Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1929-38; Chief Diplomatic Adviser to Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1938-41.
Van Zeeland, P.—Belgian Prime Minister, 1935-37.
Voloshin, A.—Head of the autonomous Government of Carpatho-Ukraine, Oct. 1938-Mar. 1939.
Voroshilov, K. Y.—Marshal of the Soviet Union, People's Commissar for Defence of the USSR.

W

- Wang Chen-ting*—Chinese Ambassador in the United States, 1937-38.
Weizsaecker, E.—State Secretary of the German Ministry for Foreign Affairs.
Welzcek, J.—German Ambassador in France.
Welles, S.—US Under-Secretary of State.
Weygand, M.—French General (ret.); Commander-in-Chief, French Forces in the Middle East, from Oct. 1939.
Wiedemann, F.—Captain, Hitler's adjutant, 1935-39; Consul General in San Francisco, 1939-41.
Wiehl, E.—Director of the Economic Policy Department in the German Foreign Ministry.
Wieniawa-Dlugoszowski, B.—Polish Ambassador in Italy.
Wilson, E.—US Chargé d'Affaires in France.
Wilson, H.—Chief Industrial Adviser to the British Government.
Wilson, H.—US Ambassador in Germany.
Winterton—member of the British Government, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.
Woermann, E.—Under State Secretary of the German Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Head of the Political Department.
Wohlthat, H.—Commissioner of the Four-Year Plan in the German Ministry for Economic Affairs.
Wood, K.—British Secretary of State for Air.

Y

Yang Tse—Chinese Ambassador in the USSR.

Z

Zey, J.—French Minister of National Education.

Zhdanov, A. A.—Member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, Deputy of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR.

Zhukov, G. K.—Corps Commander, Commander of the Soviet Army Group in the MPR in 1939.

Zog—King of Albania, Sept. 1928-Apr. 1939.

СССР В БОРЬБЕ ЗА МИР
НАКАНУНЕ ВТОРОЙ МИРОВОЙ
ВОЙНЫ (СЕНТЯБРЬ 1938 г.—АВГУСТ 1939 г.)

Часть II
на английском языке

Цена 1 руб. 77 коп.