

*Memorandum communicated by the Swedish Minister
[enclosure in the despatch of the British Foreign Office, Viscount Halifax, to the British Minister
in Stockholm, Mr. Montagu-Pollock].*

Foreign Office, January 4, 1940.

(No. 9.)

(Strictly Confidential.)

THE Royal Swedish Government have examined with the greatest interest the communication received from the British and French Governments. The Swedish Government fully share the views of the British and French Governments that the fate of Finland cannot be a matter of indifference to Sweden. In fact, no other country could be more affected by the Soviet attack on Finland than Sweden.

In view hereof, Sweden is endeavouring to assist Finland by all means in her power short of military intervention, which has not been found compatible with the exposed situation of the country. In addition to humanitarian aid, which Sweden has been giving and is giving, Sweden has come to the financial assistance of Finland in the form of funds collected from private persons, banks and companies. These contributions have been very considerable, and only a minor part of their total amount has been brought to public knowledge. Of still greater importance has been the fact that Sweden has delivered to Finland considerable quantities of war materials, the employment of which seems to have had, at least on some parts of the front, a decisive influence on the successful Finnish defence. Material delivered has also included equipment for Swedish volunteers proceeding to Finland. The material in question has been sent to such an extent that Sweden, in order to safeguard her own security, is now bound to endeavour to replace this material from abroad with the utmost speed. In addition, the Swedish Government is endeavouring in every way to strengthen its own defence forces. It is in these circumstances evident that the Swedish Government must welcome with great satisfaction the fact that Finland is receiving from other sources that assistance which seems absolutely necessary for continued successful defence. Sweden is in consequence willing to facilitate the supply to Finland of such material help as Great Britain and France may be ready to furnish or which may be forthcoming from other sources. In this connexion, the Swedish Government would, however, like to put forward some special considerations :—

Collaboration between the two great Baltic Powers may lead to such measures that effective assistance to Finland may be prevented, at least temporarily. Such consequences may especially arise in case the measures contemplated for the assistance to Finland were given in such a way that it could be said with good reason either that Sweden was participating in a common international action against Soviet Russia under the auspices of the League of Nations, or that Sweden associated herself with an Allied action against that country. An eventual common action by the two great Baltic Powers would, in addition to other consequences for Sweden herself, with great probability lead to a speedy breaking down of the resistance of Finland, without, as far as the Swedish Government can see, the Powers outside the Baltic being able to prevent this.

The Swedish Government would, in consequence, strongly recommend that assistance should be given in such a way that Sweden would not appear to take part in an international action; that deliveries of war material be given the character of Finnish purchases of war material from abroad; and that those technicians who are eventually considered necessary to accompany the war material in question be volunteers proceeding to Finland in a private capacity. Under such circumstances, the Swedish Government is willing to facilitate as far as possible, and in every way, the transit to Finland, and to organise the necessary transport on application in each case from that country. The Swedish Government ventures specially to emphasise the necessity that no publication be given to the assistance in question.

The Swedish Government wish further to state that they strongly hold the opinion that they best further Finnish, as well as common European, interests, by maintaining with firmness

that policy of neutrality which the Swedish Government declared on the outbreak of war on the 1st September, 1939.

The Royal Swedish Government finally beg to express their appreciation not only of the valuable assistance to warring Finland promised in the communication from the two Powers, but also of the understanding therein shown with regard to the position of Sweden.
Swedish Legation in London, January 4, 1940.

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