

Viscount Halifax to Sir W. Selby (Lisbon)

Foreign Office, January 17, 1940.

(No. 8.)

(Telegraphic.)

YOUR telegram No. 4 [of the 6th January: Assistance for Finland].

Portuguese Ambassador has made a similar enquiry..

His Majesty's Government have found that best way of making progress in matter of assistance for Finland is to discuss direct with Finnish Government or Finnish Legation in Stockholm what precisely Finns want and what can be supplied from this country. If Portuguese Government adopt the same procedure, His Majesty's Government will always be ready to help with advice, and with transport facilities if necessary.

Viscount Halifax to Sir P. Loraine (Rome)

Foreign Office, January 17, 1940.

(No. 38.)

(Telegraphic.)

YOUR telegram No. 57 [of 14th January: Assistance for Finland].

Finnish Government are in urgent need of more fighter aircraft to deal with Russian bombing raids, which are becoming serious.

His Majesty's Government can hardly supply more than they have given already, but I have suggested to Finnish Minister that Italian Government might be approached.

If you find from your Finnish colleague that this is being done, you might ask [Italian] Minister for Foreign Affairs whether Italian Government could consider possibility of releasing any fighters from their own stocks, pointing out that matter is urgent, and that Finns have been promised ninety-nine airplanes all from British sources.

(Repeated to Helsingfors, No. 19.)

Viscount Halifax to the Marquess of Lothian (Washington)

Foreign Office, January 17, 1940.

(No. 77.)

(Telegraphic.)

FINNISH Government are in urgent need of more fighter aircraft to deal with Russian bombing raids, which are becoming serious.

Obliged as we are to anticipate severe attack at any moment upon ourselves, His Majesty's Government can hardly supply more than they have given already, but United States Government, not being at war and with ample resources, might be able to allow United States firms to transfer to Finns machines building for them, which could be replaced later. Some such arrangement, if possible, would be of the utmost service to the Finns, on whom the Soviet Government are launching constant mass air attacks, and whose civilian morale must inevitably suffer if these are continued.

Please speak in this sense to President, if you see no objection, and do your best to persuade him to facilitate further assistance in this form. If his reaction is favourable, you should recommend your Finnish colleague to get into touch with him.

(Repeated to Helsingfors, No. 18.)

Source: British Documents on Foreign Affairs. Reports and papers from the Foreign Office confidential print. Part III. Series A (The Soviet Union and Finland.). Volume 2, document nos. 278-280. University Publications of America, 1997.