

*Viscount Halifax to Mr. Vereker (Helsingfors).—(Received March 12, 1940.)*

(No. 524.)

(Telegraphic.)

*Foreign Office, September 25, 1940.*

YOUR telegram No. 800 [of 23rd September: Transit of German troops and war material.]

1. You should at once make a formal protest in writing on the following lines :—

His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom take a grave view of the decision of the Finnish Government to allow German troops and war material to cross Finnish territory. They regard this as a flagrant breach of the neutrality which the Finnish Government have undertaken to uphold and which they themselves have taken care to respect.

His Majesty's Government cannot regard the concession granted to the Soviet Government for transit facilities to Hangö as in any way parallel to the concession now granted to the German Government. Former was part of the Treaty of Peace concluded at the end of hostilities between Finland and the Soviet Union, which was not a belligerent in the war in which this country is engaged. Concession to Germany, our adversary in a war in which the Finnish Government have proclaimed their neutrality, is not part of any peace settlement, and Finnish Government can hardly pretend that Finland would have been invaded if they had refused German request for transit facilities.

Precedent of granting of transit facilities by Swedish Government is also no justification. His Majesty's Government protested vigorously to the Swedish Government against this unneutral act, as was announced at the time. Moreover, Swedish concession only permits replacement of troops, while Finnish concession will apparently allow garrisons to be increased. His Majesty's Government must therefore protest strongly against this act. which amounts to direct assistance to their enemy.

You should inform your Norwegian colleague of the action which you are taking.

---

*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, original document nr. 88. University Publications of America, 1997.