

*Sir S. Cripps to Viscount Halifax.—(Received October 20.)*

*Moscow, October 19, 1940.*

(No. 892.)

(Telegraphic.)

SWEDISH Minister, who recently returned from Stockholm, told me last night he had seen Molotov on question of Finland. Following points emerged from his conversation :—

1. Molotov had been suspicious of Swedish support for anti-Russian feeling in Finland, but was assured that there was no secret or other agreement or arrangement.
2. Molotov was very much concerned about German troops, and said Soviet Government were taking steps to get fuller and more accurate details of their numbers and position.
3. He stated also that Soviet Government were not likely to forget this incident, which, Swedish Minister gathered, he blamed on Germany rather than Finland.
4. Molotov was, however, very annoyed at the enthusiastic pro-German and anti-Russian feeling which, according to Swedish Minister, was being displayed in Finnish press and otherwise publicly. Though Molotov said he trusted the Finnish Minister here and Prime Minister of Finland as being desirous of a genuine friendly feeling towards Russia, there were others with a different outlook.
5. Swedish Minister stated that he thought that the attitude of Finland towards coming of German troops was very foolish and quite unnecessarily antagonistic to Russia, and, if it got them into trouble with Russia, Sweden would not help them out of it, as it would be their own fault.
6. He does not think that there is any likelihood of any Russian action for the present, but if Germany were to make an offensive in the Balkans it might be that Russia would take action to prevent Finland from being penetrated by Germany. He is convinced of the fundamental hostility towards, and reprobation of, Germany here among 90 per cent, of the people and in the Soviet Government, though Molotov is pro-German and very anti-British in his views, while Vyshinski is the contrary, and has probably been put in in case a change of policy is decided on.

(Repeated to Stockholm, No. 116, and Helsingfors, No. 64.)

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*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 1, document nr. 257. University Publications of America, 1997.