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ANNIVERSARY OF THE GREAT VICTORY:
SHARED RESPONSIBILITY TO HISTORY
AND OUR FUTURE

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75 years have passed since the end of the Great Patriotic War. Several generations have grown up over the years. The political map of the planet has changed. The Soviet Union that claimed an epic and crushing victory over Nazism and saved the entire world is gone. Besides, the events of that war have long become a distant memory, even for its participants. So why does Russia celebrate May 9 as the biggest holiday? Why does life almost come to a halt on June 22? And why does one feel a lump rise in their throat?

They usually say that the war has left a deep imprint on every family's history. Behind these words, there are fates of millions of people, their sufferings and the pain of loss. Behind these words, there is also the pride, the truth and the memory.

For my parents, the war meant the terrible ordeals of the Siege of Leningrad where my two-year old brother Vitya died. It was the place where my mother miraculously managed to survive. My father, despite being exempt from active duty, volunteered to defend his hometown. He made

the same decision as millions of Soviet citizens. He fought at the Nevsky Pyatachok bridgehead and was severely wounded. The more years pass, the more I feel the need to talk to my parents and learn more about the war period of their lives. But I no longer have the opportunity to do so. This is the reason why I treasure in my heart the conversations I had with my father and mother on this subject, as well as the little emotion they showed.

People of my age and I believe it is important that our children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren understand the torment and hardships their ancestors had to endure. They need to understand how their ancestors managed to persevere and win. Where did their sheer and unbending willpower that amazed and fascinated the whole world come from? Yes, they were defending their homes, children, loved ones and families, but more importantly, they shared the love for their homeland, their Motherland. That deep-seated and intimate feeling is fully reflected in the very essence of our nation and became one of the decisive factors in its heroic and sacrificial fight against the Nazis.

People often wonder what would today's generation do? How will it act when faced with a crisis situation? I see young doctors, nurses and sometimes fresh graduates that go to the 'red zone' to save lives. I see our servicemen

fighting international terrorism in the North Caucasus and fighting to the bitter end in Syria. They are so young! Many servicemen who were part of the legendary immortal 6th Paratroop Company were 19–20 years old. But all of them proved that they deserved to inherit the feat of the warriors of our Motherland that defended it during the Great Patriotic War.

This is why I am confident that one of the characteristic features of the peoples of Russia is to fulfil their duty without feeling sorry for themselves when the circumstances so demand. Such values as selflessness, patriotism, love for their home, their family and Motherland remain fundamental and integral to the Russian society to this day. These values are, to a large extent, the backbone of our country's sovereignty.

Nowadays, we have new traditions created by the people, such as the Immortal Regiment. This is the memory march that symbolized our gratitude, as well as the living connection and the blood ties between generations. Millions of people come out to the streets carrying the photographs of their relatives who defended their Motherland and defeated the Nazis. This means that their lives, the ordeals and sacrifices they endured, as well as the Victory that they passed to us will never be forgotten.

We have a responsibility to our past and our future to do our utmost to prevent those horrible tragedies from happening

ever again. Hence, I was compelled to come out with an article about World War II and the Great Patriotic War. I have discussed this idea on several occasions with world leaders, and they have showed their support. At the summit of CIS leaders held at the end of last year, we all agreed on one thing: it is essential to pass on to future generations the memory of the fact that the Nazis were defeated first and foremost by the entire Soviet people and that representatives of all republics of the Soviet Union fought side by side together in that heroic battle, both on the frontlines and in the rear. During that summit, I also talked with my counterparts about the challenging pre-war period.

That conversation caused a stir in Europe and the world. It means that it is indeed high time that we revisited the lessons of the past. At the same time, there were many emotional outbursts, poorly disguised insecurities and loud accusations that followed. Acting out of habit, certain politicians rushed to claim that Russia was trying to rewrite history. However, they failed to rebut a single fact or refute a single argument. It is indeed difficult, if not impossible, to argue with the original documents that, by the way, can be found not only in Russian, but also in foreign archives.

Thus, there is a need to further examine the reasons that caused the world war and reflect on its complicated events,

tragedies and victories, as well as its lessons, both for our country and the entire world. And like I said, it is crucial to rely exclusively on archive documents and contemporary evidence while avoiding any ideological or politicized speculations.

I would like to once again recall the obvious fact. The root causes of World War II mainly stem from the decisions made after World War I. The Treaty of Versailles became a symbol of grave injustice for Germany. It basically implied that the country was to be robbed, being forced to pay enormous reparations to the Western allies that drained its economy. French Marshal Ferdinand Foch who served as the Supreme Allied Commander gave a prophetic description of that Treaty: “This is not peace. It is an armistice for twenty years.”

It was the national humiliation that became a fertile ground for radical and revenge-seeking sentiments in Germany. The Nazis skillfully played on people’s emotions and built their propaganda promising to deliver Germany from the “legacy of Versailles” and restore the country to its former power while essentially pushing German people into war. Paradoxically, the Western states, particularly the United Kingdom and the United States, directly or indirectly contributed to this. Their financial and industrial

circles actively invested in German factories and plants manufacturing military products. Besides, many people in the aristocracy and political establishment supported radical, far-right and nationalist movements that were on the rise both in Germany and in Europe.

“Versailles world order” caused numerous implicit controversies and apparent conflicts. They revolved around the borders of new European states randomly set by the victors in World War I. That boundary delimitation was almost immediately followed by territorial disputes and mutual claims that turned into “time bombs.”

One of the major outcomes of World War I was the establishment of the League of Nations. There were high expectations for that international organization to ensure lasting peace and collective security. This was a progressive idea that, if followed through consistently, could actually prevent the horrors of a global war from happening again.

However, the League of Nations dominated by the victorious powers of France and the United Kingdom proved ineffective and just got swamped by pointless discussions. The League of Nations and the European continent in general turned a deaf ear to the repeated calls of the Soviet Union to establish an equitable collective security system and sign Eastern European and Pacific

pacts to prevent aggression. These proposals were disregarded.

The League of Nations also failed to prevent conflicts in various parts of the world, such as the attack of Italy on Ethiopia, the civil war in Spain, the Japanese aggression against China and the Anschluss of Austria. Furthermore, in case of the Munich Betrayal that, in addition to Hitler and Mussolini, involved British and French leaders, Czechoslovakia was taken apart with the full approval of the Council of the League of Nations. I would like to point out in this regard that, unlike many other European leaders of that time, Stalin did not disgrace himself by meeting with Hitler who was known among the Western nations as quite a reputable politician and was a welcome guest in the European capitals.

Poland was also engaged in the partition of Czechoslovakia along with Germany. They decided together in advance who would get what Czechoslovak territories. On September 20, 1938, Polish Ambassador to Germany Józef Lipski reported to Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland Józef Beck on the following assurances made by Hitler: "...in case of a conflict between Poland and Czechoslovakia over our interests in Teschen, the Reich would stand by Poland." The Nazi leader even prompted

and advised that Poland started to act “only after the Germans occupy the Sudetes...” (*Document No. 1*)

Poland was aware that without Hitler’s support, its annexationist plans were doomed to fail. I would like to quote in this regard a record of the conversation between German Ambassador to Warsaw Hans-Adolf von Moltke and Józef Beck that took place on October 1, 1938, and was focused on the Polish-Czech relations and the position of the Soviet Union in this matter. It says: “Mr. Beck...expressed his great gratitude for the loyal treatment accorded to Polish interests at the Munich conference, as well as the sincerity of relations during the Czech conflict. The Government and the public [of Poland] fully appreciate the position of the Fuehrer and Chancellor...” (*Document No. 2*)

The partition of Czechoslovakia was brutal and cynical. Munich destroyed even the formal, fragile guarantees that remained on the continent. It showed that mutual agreements were worthless. It was the Munich Betrayal that served as the “trigger” and made the great war in Europe inevitable.

Today, European politicians, and Polish leaders in particular, wish to sweep the Munich Betrayal under the carpet. Why? The fact that their countries once broke their commitments and supported the Munich Betrayal, with some of them even participating in divvying up the take, is not

the only reason. Another is that it is kind of embarrassing to recall that during those dramatic days of 1938, the Soviet Union was the only one to stand up for Czechoslovakia.

The Soviet Union, in accordance with its international obligations, including agreements with France and Czechoslovakia, tried to prevent the tragedy from happening. Meanwhile, Poland, in pursuit of its interests, was doing its utmost to hamper the establishment of a collective security system in Europe. Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs Józef Beck wrote about it directly in his letter of September 19, 1938, to the aforementioned Ambassador Józef Lipski before his meeting with Hitler: “over the past year, the Polish government four times rejected the proposal to join the international intervention in defense of Czechoslovakia.” (*Document No. 3*)

Britain, as well as France, which was at the time the main ally of the Czechs and Slovaks, chose to withdraw their guarantees and abandon this Eastern European country to its fate. In so doing, they sought to direct the attention of the Nazis eastward so that Germany and the Soviet Union would inevitably clash and bleed each other white.

That was the essence of the western policy of ‘appeasement,’ which was pursued not only towards the Third Reich but also towards other participants of the so-called Anti-

Comintern Pact – the fascist Italy and militarist Japan. In the Far East, this policy culminated in the conclusion of the Anglo-Japanese agreement in the summer of 1939, which gave Tokyo a free hand in China. The leading European powers were unwilling to recognize the mortal danger posed by Germany and its allies to the whole world. They were hoping that they themselves would be left untouched by the war.

The Munich Betrayal showed to the Soviet Union that the Western countries would deal with security issues without taking its interests into account. In fact, they could even create an anti-Soviet front, if needed.

Nevertheless, the Soviet Union did its utmost to use every chance to create an Anti-Hitler coalition. Despite – I will say it again – the double dealing on the part of the Western countries. For instance, the intelligence services reported to the Soviet leadership detailed information on the behind-the-scenes contacts between Britain and Germany in the summer of 1939. The important thing is that those contacts were quite active and practically coincided with the tripartite negotiations between France, Great Britain and the USSR, which were, on the contrary, deliberately protracted by the Western partners. In this connection, I will cite a document from the British archives. It contains instructions to the British military mission that came to

Moscow in August 1939. It directly states that the delegation was to “go very slowly with the conversations” and that “the British Government is unwilling to enter into any detailed commitments which are likely to tie our hands in all circumstances.” (*Document No. 4*) I will also note that, unlike the British and French delegations, the Soviet delegation was headed by top commanders of the Red Army, who had the necessary authority to “sign the military convention on the organization of military defense of England, France and the USSR against aggression in Europe.” (*Document No. 5*)

Poland played its role in the failure of those negotiations as it did not want to have any obligations to the Soviet side. Even under pressure from their Western allies, the Polish leadership rejected the idea of joint action with the Red Army to fight against the Wehrmacht. It was only when they learned of the arrival of Joachim von Ribbentrop to Moscow that Józef Beck reluctantly and not directly, but through French diplomats, notified the Soviet side: “... in the event of a joint action against the German aggression, cooperation between Poland and the Soviet Union, subject to technical conditions to be determined, is not excluded (or is possible)...” (*Document No. 6*). At the same time, he explained to his colleagues: “... I was not against to this wording only for the sake of facilitating tactics, but our

principled position with regard to the Soviet Union was final and remained unchanged.” (*Document No. 7*)

In these circumstances, the Soviet Union signed the Non-Aggression Pact with Germany. It was practically the last among the European countries to do so. Besides, it was done in the face of a real threat of war on two fronts – with Germany in the west and with Japan in the east, where intense fighting on the Khalkhin Gol River was already underway.

Stalin and his entourage, indeed, deserve many legitimate accusations. We remember the crimes committed by the regime against its own people and the horror of mass repressions. In other words, there are many things the Soviet leaders can be reproached for, but poor understanding of the nature of external threats is not one of them. They saw how attempts were made to leave the Soviet Union alone to deal with Germany and its allies. Bearing in mind this real threat, they sought to buy precious time needed to strengthen the country’s defenses.

Nowadays, we hear lots of speculations and accusations against modern Russia in connection with the Non-Aggression Pact signed back then. Yes, Russia is the legal successor state to the USSR, and the Soviet period – with all its triumphs and tragedies – is an inalienable part of our thousand-year-long history. However, let me also remind you

that the Soviet Union gave a legal and moral assessment of the so-called Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact. The Supreme Soviet in its resolution of December 24, 1989, officially denounced the secret protocols as “an act of personal power” which in no way reflected “the will of the Soviet people who bear no responsibility for this collusion.”

Yet other states prefer to forget the agreements carrying signatures of the Nazis and Western politicians, not to mention giving legal or political assessments of such cooperation, including the silent acquiescence – or even direct abetment – of some European politicians in the barbarous plans of the Nazis. It will suffice to remember the cynical phrase said by Polish Ambassador to Germany Józef Lipski during his conversation with Hitler on September 20, 1938: for solving the Jewish problem, “...we [the Poles] would erect a beautiful monument to him in Warsaw.”
(Document No. 1)

Besides, we do not know if there were any secret “protocols” or annexes to agreements of a number of countries with the Nazis. The only thing that is left to do is to take their word for it. In particular, materials pertaining to the secret Anglo-German talks still have not been declassified. Therefore, we urge all states to step up the process of making their archives public and publishing previously unknown

documents of the war and pre-war periods – the way Russia has been doing it in recent years. In this context, we are ready for broad cooperation and joint research projects engaging historians.

But let us go back to the events immediately preceding World War II. It was naïve to believe that Hitler, once done with Czechoslovakia, would not make new territorial claims. This time the claims involved its recent accomplice in the partition of Czechoslovakia – Poland. Here, the legacy of Versailles, particularly the fate of the so-called Danzig Corridor, was yet again used as the pretext. The blame for the tragedy that Poland then suffered lies entirely with the Polish leadership, which had impeded the formation of a military alliance between Britain, France and the Soviet Union and relied on the help from its Western partners, throwing its own people under the steamroller of Hitler's machine of destruction.

The German offensive was mounted in full accordance with the blitzkrieg doctrine. Despite the fierce, heroic resistance of the Polish army, on September 8, 1939 – only a week after the war broke out – the German troops were on the approaches to Warsaw. By September 17, the military and political leaders of Poland had fled to Romania, betraying its people, who continued to fight against the invaders.

Poland's hope for help from its Western allies was vain. After the war against Germany was declared, the French troops advanced only a few tens of kilometers deep into the German territory. All of it looked like a mere demonstration of vigorous action. Moreover, the Anglo-French Supreme War Council, holding its first meeting in the French city of Abbeville on September 12, 1939, decided to call off the offensive altogether in view of the rapid developments in Poland. That was when the infamous Phony War started. What Britain and France did was a blatant betrayal of their obligations to Poland.

Later, during the Nuremberg Trials, German generals explained their quick success in the East. Former Chief of the Operations Staff of the German Armed Forces High Command General Alfred Jodl admitted: "... we did not suffer defeat as early as 1939 only because about 110 French and British divisions stationed in the west against 23 German divisions during our war with Poland remained absolutely idle."

I asked for retrieval from the archives of the whole body of materials pertaining to the contacts between the USSR and Germany in the dramatic days of August and September 1939. According to the documents, paragraph 2 of the Secret Protocol to the German-Soviet Non-

Aggression Pact of August 23, 1939, stated that, in the event of territorial-political reorganization of the districts making up the Polish state, the border between the spheres of interest of the two countries would run “approximately along the Narew, Vistula and San rivers.” In other words, the Soviet sphere of influence included not only the territories that were mostly home to Ukrainian and Belorussian population but also the historically Polish lands in the Vistula and Bug interfluve. This fact is known to very few these days.

Similarly, very few know that, immediately after the attack on Poland, in the early days of September 1939, Berlin strongly and repeatedly called on Moscow to join the military action. However, the Soviet leadership ignored those calls and planned to avoid engaging in the dramatic developments as long as possible.

It was only when it became absolutely clear that Great Britain and France were not going to help their ally and the Wehrmacht could swiftly occupy entire Poland and thus appear on the approaches to Minsk that the Soviet Union decided to send in, on the morning of September 17, Red Army units into the so-called Eastern Borderlines (Kresy), which nowadays form part of the territories of Belorussia, Ukraine and Lithuania.

Obviously, there was no alternative. Otherwise, the USSR would face seriously increased risks because – I will say this again – the old Soviet-Polish border ran only within a few tens of kilometers from Minsk. The country would have to enter the inevitable war with the Nazis from very disadvantageous strategic positions, while millions of people of different nationalities, including the Jews living near Brest and Grodno, Przemyśl, Lvov and Wilno, would be left to die at the hands of the Nazis and their local accomplices – anti-Semites and radical nationalists.

The fact that the Soviet Union sought to avoid engaging in the growing conflict for as long as possible and was unwilling to fight side by side with Germany was the reason why the real contact between the Soviet and the German troops occurred much farther east than the borders agreed in the secret protocol. It was not on the Vistula River but closer to the so-called Curzon Line, which back in 1919 was recommended by the Triple Entente as the eastern border of Poland.

As is known, the subjunctive mood can hardly be used when we speak of the past events. I will only say that, in September 1939, the Soviet leadership had an opportunity to move the western borders of the USSR even farther west, all the way to Warsaw, but decided against it.

The Germans suggested formalizing the new status quo. On September 28, 1939, Joachim von Ribbentrop and Vyacheslav Molotov signed in Moscow the Boundary and Friendship Treaty between Germany and the Soviet Union, as well as the secret protocol on changing the state border, according to which the border was recognized at the demarcation line where the two armies de-facto stood.

In autumn 1939, the Soviet Union, pursuing its strategic military and defensive goals, started the process of incorporation of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia. Their accession to the USSR was implemented on a contractual basis, with the consent of the elected authorities. This was in line with international and state law of that time. Besides, in October 1939, the city of Wilno and the surrounding area, which had previously been part of Poland, were returned to Lithuania. The Baltic republics within the USSR preserved their government bodies, language, and had representation in the higher government entities of the Soviet Union.

During all these months there was an ongoing invisible diplomatic and politico-military struggle and intelligence work. Moscow understood that it was facing a fierce and cruel enemy, and that a covert war against Nazism was already going on. And there was no reason to take official statements and formal protocol notes of that time as a proof

of ‘friendship’ between the USSR and Germany. The Soviet Union had active trade and technical contacts not only with Germany, but with other countries as well. Whereas Hitler tried again and again to draw the Soviet Union into Germany’s confrontation with the UK. But the Soviet government stood firm.

The last attempt to persuade the USSR to act together was made by Hitler during Molotov’s visit to Berlin in November 1940. But Molotov accurately followed Stalin’s instructions (*Document No. 8*) and limited himself to a general discussion of the German idea of the Soviet Union joining the Tripartite Pact signed by Germany, Italy and Japan in September 1940 and directed against the UK and the United States. No wonder that already on November 17 Molotov gave the following instructions to Soviet plenipotentiary representative in London Ivan Maisky: “For your information...No agreement was signed or was intended to be signed in Berlin. We just exchanged our views in Berlin...and that was all...Apparently, the Germans and the Japanese seem anxious to push us towards the Gulf and India. We declined the discussion of this matter as we consider such advice on the part of Germany to be inappropriate.” (*Document No. 9*) On November 25, the Soviet leadership called it a day altogether by officially putting forward to

Berlin the conditions that were unacceptable to the Nazis, including the withdrawal of German troops from Finland, mutual assistance treaty between Bulgaria and the USSR, and a number of others. Thus it deliberately excluded any possibility of joining the Pact. Such position definitely shaped the Fuehrer's intention to unleash a war against the USSR. And already in December, putting aside the warnings of his strategists about the disastrous danger of having a two-front war, Hitler approved Operation Barbarossa. He did this with the knowledge that the Soviet Union was the major force that opposed him in Europe and that the upcoming battle in the East would decide the outcome of the world war. He had no doubts as to the swiftness and success of the Moscow campaign.

And here I would like to highlight the following: Western countries, as a matter of fact, agreed at that time with the Soviet actions and recognized the Soviet Union's intention to ensure its national security. Indeed, back on October 1, 1939, Winston Churchill, the First Lord of the Admiralty back then, in his speech on the radio said, "Russia has pursued a cold policy of self-interest... But that the Russian Armies should be standing on this line [meaning the new Western border] was clearly necessary for the safety of Russia against the Nazi menace." (*Document No. 10*) On October 26, 1939,

speaking in the House of Lords, Britain's Foreign Secretary Lord Halifax said, "...it should be recalled that the Soviet government's actions were to move the border essentially to the line recommended at the Versailles Conference by Lord Curzon... I only cite historical facts and believe they are indisputable." Prominent British politician and statesman David Lloyd George emphasized, "The Russian Armies occupied the territories that are not Polish and that were forcibly seized by Poland after World War I ... It would be an act of criminal insanity to put the Russian advancement on a par with the German one."

In informal communications with Soviet plenipotentiary representative Ivan Maisky, British high-ranking politicians and diplomats spoke even more openly. On October 17, 1939, Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Richard Austen Butler confided to him that "the British government circles believed there could be no question of returning Western Ukraine and Belorussia to Poland. If it were possible to create an ethnographic Poland of a modest size with a guarantee not only of the USSR and Germany, but also of Britain and France, the British government would consider itself quite satisfied." (*Document No. 11*) On October 27, 1939, Neville Chamberlain's senior advisor Horace Wilson said that "Poland would have to be restored as an independent

state on its ethnographic basis, but without Western Ukraine and Belarus.” (*Document No. 12*)

It is worth noting that in the course of these conversations the possibilities for improving British-Soviet relations were also explored. These contacts to a large extent laid the foundation for future alliance and Anti-Hitler coalition. Winston Churchill stood out among responsible and far-sighted politicians and, despite his infamous dislike for the USSR, had been in favor of cooperating with the Soviets even before. Back in May 1939, he said in the House of Commons, “We shall be in mortal danger if we fail to create a Grand Alliance against aggression. The worst folly... would be to... drive away any natural cooperation with Soviet Russia...” And after the start of hostilities in Europe, at his meeting with Ivan Maisky on October 6, 1939, he confided that there were “no serious contradictions between the UK and the USSR and, therefore, there was no reason for strained or unsatisfactory relations. The British government was eager to develop trade relations and willing to discuss any other measures that might improve the relationships.” (*Document No. 13*)

World War II did not happen overnight, nor did it start unexpectedly or all of a sudden. German aggression against Poland was not out of nowhere. It was the result of a number

of tendencies and factors in the world politics of that time. All pre-war events fell into place to form one fatal chain. But, undoubtedly, the main factors that predetermined the greatest tragedy in the history of mankind were state egoism, cowardice, appeasement of the aggressor who was gaining strength, and unwillingness of political elites to search for compromise.

Therefore, it is unfair to claim that the two-day visit to Moscow of Nazi Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop was the main reason for the start of World War II. All the leading countries are to a certain extent responsible for its outbreak. Each of them made fatal mistakes, arrogantly believing that they could outsmart others, secure unilateral advantages for themselves or stay away from the impending global catastrophe. This short-sightedness, the refusal to create a collective security system cost millions of lives and tremendous losses.

Saying this, I by no means intend to take on the role of a judge, who is ready to accuse or acquit anyone, let alone initiate a new round of international information confrontation in the historical field that could set countries and peoples at loggerheads. I believe that it is academics with a wide representation of respected scholars from different countries of the world who should search for a balanced

assessment of what happened. We all need the truth and objectivity. On my part, I have always encouraged my colleagues to build a calm, open and trust-based dialogue, to look at the common past in a self-critical and unbiased manner. Such an approach will make it possible not to repeat the mistakes committed back then and to ensure peaceful and successful development for years to come.

However, many of our partners are not yet ready for joint work. On the contrary, pursuing their goals, they increase the number and the scope of information attacks against our country, trying to make us provide excuses and feel guilty. They adopt thoroughly hypocritical and politically motivated declarations. Thus, for example, the resolution on the Importance of European Remembrance for the Future of Europe approved by the European Parliament on September 19, 2019, directly accused the USSR – along with the Nazi Germany – of unleashing World War II. Needless to say, there is no mention of Munich in it whatsoever.

I believe that such ‘paperwork’ – for I cannot call this resolution a document – which is clearly intended to provoke a scandal, is fraught with real and dangerous threats, since it was adopted by a highly respectable institution. What did it show? Regrettably, it revealed a deliberate policy aimed at destroying the post-war

world order whose creation was a matter of honor and responsibility for the countries a number of representatives of which voted today in favor of this deceitful resolution. Thus, they challenged the conclusions of the Nuremberg Tribunal and the efforts of the international community to create universal international institutions after the victorious 1945. Let me remind you in this regard that the process of European integration itself leading to the establishment of relevant structures, including the European Parliament, became possible only due to the lessons learnt from the past and its accurate legal and political assessment. And those who deliberately put this consensus into question undermine the foundations of the entire post-war Europe.

Apart from posing a threat to the fundamental principles of the world order, this also raises certain moral and ethical issues. Desecrating and insulting the memory is mean. Meanness can be deliberate, hypocritical and pretty much intentional as in the situation when declarations commemorating the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II mention all participants in the Anti-Hitler coalition except for the Soviet Union. Meanness can be cowardly as in the situation when monuments erected in honor of those who fought against Nazism are demolished and these shameful acts are justified by the false slogans of the fight

against an unwelcome ideology and alleged occupation. Meanness can also be bloody as in the situation when those who come out against neo-Nazis and Bandera's successors are killed and burned. Once again, meanness can have different manifestations, but this does not make it less disgusting.

Neglecting the lessons of history inevitably leads to a harsh payback. We will firmly uphold the truth based on documented historical facts. We will continue to be honest and impartial about the events of World War II. This includes a large-scale project to establish Russia's largest collection of archival records, film and photo materials about the history of World War II and the pre war period.

Such work is already underway. Many new, recently discovered or declassified materials were also used in the preparation of this article. In this connection, I can state with all responsibility that there are no archive documents that would confirm the assumption that the USSR intended to start a preventive war against Germany. The Soviet military leadership indeed followed a doctrine according to which, in the event of aggression, the Red Army would promptly confront the enemy, go on the offensive and wage war on enemy territory. However, such strategic plans did not imply any intention to attack Germany first.

Of course, military planning documents, letters of instruction of Soviet and German headquarters are now available to historians. Finally, we know the true course of events. From the perspective of this knowledge, many argue about the actions, mistakes and misjudgment of the country's military and political leadership. In this regard, I will say one thing: along with a huge flow of misinformation of various kinds, Soviet leaders also received true information about the upcoming Nazi aggression. In the pre-war months, they took steps to improve the combat readiness of the country, including the secret recruitment of a part of those liable for military duty for military training and the redeployment of units and reserves from internal military districts to western borders.

The war did not come as a surprise, people were expecting it, preparing for it. But the Nazi attack was truly unprecedented in terms of its destructive power. On June 22, 1941, the Soviet Union faced the strongest, most mobilized and skilled army in the world with the industrial, economic and military potential of almost all Europe working for it. Not only the Wehrmacht, but also Germany's satellites and military contingents of many other states of the European continent, took part in this deadly invasion.

The most serious military defeats in 1941 brought the country to the brink of catastrophe. Combat power and control had to be restored by extreme means, nation-wide mobilization and intensification of all efforts of the state and the people. In summer 1941, millions of citizens, hundreds of factories and industries began to be evacuated under enemy fire to the east of the country. The manufacture of weapons and munition, that had started to be supplied to the front already in the first military winter, was launched behind the lines in the shortest possible time, and by 1943, the rates of military production of Germany and its allies were exceeded. Within eighteen months, the Soviet people did something that seemed impossible, both on the front lines and the home front. It is still hard to realize, understand and imagine what incredible efforts, courage, dedication these greatest achievements were worth.

The tremendous power of Soviet society, united by the desire to protect their native land, rose against the powerful, armed to the teeth, and cold-blooded Nazi invading machine. It stood up to take revenge on the enemy, who had broken and trampled peaceful life, as well as people's plans and hopes.

Of course, fear, confusion and desperation were taking over some people during this terrible and bloody war. There

were betrayal and desertion. The harsh splits caused by the revolution and the Civil War, nihilism, mockery of national history, traditions and faith that the Bolsheviks tried to impose, especially in the first years after coming to power – all of this had its impact. But the general attitude of the Soviet citizens and our compatriots who found themselves abroad was different – to save and protect the Motherland. It was a real and irrepressible impulse. People were looking for support in true patriotic values.

The Nazi ‘strategists’ were convinced that a huge multinational state could easily be brought to heel. They thought that the sudden outbreak of the war, its mercilessness and unbearable hardships would inevitably exacerbate inter-ethnic relations, and that the country could be split into pieces. Hitler clearly stated that Germany’s policy towards the peoples living in the vastness of Russia should be to promote any form of disagreement and split (*Documents No. 14 and 15*)

But from the very first days, it was clear that the Nazi plan had failed. The Brest Fortress was protected to the last drop of blood by its defenders representing more than 30 ethnicities. Throughout the war – both in large-scale decisive battles and in the protection of every foothold, every meter of native land – we see examples of such unity.

The Volga region and the Urals, Siberia and the Far East, the republics of Central Asia and Transcaucasia became home to millions of evacuees. Their residents shared everything they had and provided all the support they could. Friendship of peoples and mutual help became a real indestructible fortress for the enemy.

The Soviet Union and the Red Army, no matter what anyone is trying to prove today, made the main and crucial contribution to the defeat of Nazism. These were heroes who fought to the end surrounded by the enemy at Bialystok and Mogilev, Uman and Kiev, Vyazma and Kharkov. They launched attacks near Moscow and Stalingrad, Sevastopol and Odessa, Kursk and Smolensk. They liberated Warsaw, Belgrade, Vienna and Prague. They stormed Koenigsberg and Berlin.

We contend for genuine, unvarnished or whitewashed truth about war. This national and human truth, which is hard, bitter and merciless, has been handed down to us by writers and poets who walked through fire and hell of front trials. For my generation, as well as for many others, their honest and deep stories, novels, piercing trench prose and poems have left their mark on the soul forever. Honoring veterans who did everything they could for the Victory and remembering those who died on the battlefield has become our moral duty.

Today, the simple and great in their essence lines of Alexander Tvardovsky's poem "I was killed near Rzhev ..." dedicated to the participants of the bloody and brutal battle of the Great Patriotic War in the center of the Soviet-German front line are astonishing. In the battles for Rzhev and the Rzhev Salient alone from October 1941 to March 1943, the Red Army lost 1,342,888 people, including wounded and missing in action. For the first time, I call out these terrible, tragic and far from complete figures collected from archive sources. I do it to honor the memory of the feat of known and nameless heroes, who for various reasons were undeservingly and unfairly little talked about or not mentioned at all in the post-war years.

Let me cite another document. This is a draft report by Ivan Maisky for the Allied Commission on Reparations from Germany prepared in February 1945. The Commission's task was to define a formula according to which defeated Germany would have to pay for the damages sustained by the victor powers. The report concluded that "the number of soldier-days spent by Germany on the Soviet front is at least ten times higher than on all other allied fronts. The Soviet front also drew back...four-fifths of German tanks and about two-thirds of German aircraft." (*Document No. 16*) On the whole, the USSR accounted for about 75 percent of

all military efforts undertaken by the Anti-Hitler Coalition. During the war period, the Red Army “ground up” 626 divisions of the Axis states, of which 508 were German.

On April 28, 1942, Franklin D. Roosevelt said in his address to the American nation: “These Russian forces have destroyed and are destroying more armed power of our enemies – troops, planes, tanks, and guns – than all the other United Nations put together.” (*Document No. 17*) Winston Churchill in his message to Joseph Stalin of September 27, 1944, wrote that “it is the Russian army that tore the guts out of the German military machine...” (*Document No. 18*)

Such an assessment has resonated throughout the world. Because these words are the great truth, which no one doubted then. Almost 27 million Soviet citizens lost their lives on the fronts, in German prisons, starved to death and were bombed, died in ghettos and furnaces of the Nazi death camps. The USSR lost one in seven of its citizens, the UK lost one in 127, and the United States lost one in 320. Unfortunately, this figure of the Soviet Union’s hardest and grievous losses is not exhaustive. The painstaking work should be continued to restore the names and fates of all who have perished – Red Army soldiers, partisans, underground fighters, prisoners of war and concentration camps, and civilians killed by the death squads. It is our duty. Special role here belongs to

members of the search movement, military patriotic and volunteer associations, projects like the electronic database “Pamyat Naroda” (Memory of the People), which contains archival documents. Surely, close international cooperation is needed in such a common humanitarian task.

The efforts of all countries and peoples who fought against a common enemy resulted in victory. The British army protected its homeland from invasion, fought the Nazis and their satellites in the Mediterranean and North Africa. American and British troops liberated Italy and opened the Second Front. The United States dealt powerful and crushing strikes against the aggressor in the Pacific Ocean. We remember the tremendous sacrifices made by the Chinese people and their great role in defeating Japanese militarists. Let us not forget the fighters of Fighting France, who did not fall for the shameful capitulation and continued to fight against the Nazis.

We will also always be grateful for the assistance rendered by the Allies in providing the Red Army with munition, raw materials, food and equipment, since that help was significant – about 7 percent of the total military production of the Soviet Union.

The core of the Anti-Hitler Coalition began to take shape immediately after the attack on the Soviet Union where the

United States and Britain unconditionally supported it in the fight against Hitler's Germany. At the Tehran Conference in 1943, Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill formed an alliance of great powers, agreed to elaborate coalition diplomacy and a joint strategy in the fight against a common deadly threat. The leaders of the Big Three had a clear understanding that the unification of industrial, resource and military capabilities of the USSR, the United States and the UK will give unchallenged supremacy over the enemy.

The Soviet Union fully fulfilled its obligations to its allies and always offered a helping hand. Thus, the Red Army supported the landing of the Anglo-American troops in Normandy by carrying out a large-scale Operation Bagration in Belorussia. In January 1945, having broken through to the Oder River, our soldiers put an end to the last powerful offensive of the Wehrmacht on the Western Front in the Ardennes. Three months after the victory over Germany, the USSR, in full accordance with the Yalta agreements, declared war on Japan and defeated the million-strong Kwantung Army.

Back in July 1941, the Soviet leadership declared that "the purpose of the war against fascist oppressors was not only the elimination of the threat looming over our country, but also help for all the peoples of Europe suffering under

the yoke of German fascism.” By mid-1944, the enemy was expelled from virtually all of the Soviet territory. However, the enemy had to be finished off in its lair. So, the Red Army started its liberation mission in Europe. It saved entire nations from destruction and enslavement, and from the horror of the Holocaust. They were saved at the cost of hundreds of thousands of lives of Soviet soldiers.

It is also important not to forget about the enormous material assistance that the USSR provided to the liberated countries in eliminating the threat of hunger and in rebuilding their economies and infrastructure. That was done at the time when ashes stretched for thousands of miles all the way from Brest to Moscow and the Volga. For instance, in May 1945, the Austrian government asked the USSR to provide assistance with food, as it “had no idea how to feed its population in the next seven weeks before the new harvest.” State Chancellor of the Provisional Government of the Austrian Republic Karl Renner described the consent of the Soviet leadership to send food as a “saving act” that the Austrians would never forget.

The Allies jointly established the International Military Tribunal to punish Nazi political and war criminals. Its decisions contained a clear legal qualification of crimes against humanity, such as genocide, ethnic and religious

cleansing, anti-Semitism and xenophobia. The Nuremberg Tribunal also directly and unambiguously condemned the accomplices of the Nazis, collaborators of various kinds.

This shameful phenomenon manifested itself in all European countries. Such figures as Pétain, Quisling, Vlasov, Bandera, their henchmen and followers – though they were disguised as fighters for national independence or freedom from communism – are traitors and butchers. In terms of inhumanity, they often exceeded their masters. In their desire to serve, as part of special punitive groups they willingly executed the most inhuman orders. They were responsible for such bloody events as the shootings of Babi Yar, the Volhynia massacre, burnt Khatyn, and acts of destruction of Jews in Lithuania and Latvia.

Today as well, our position remains unchanged – there can be no excuse for the criminal acts of Nazi collaborators, there is no period of limitations for them. It is therefore bewildering that in certain countries those who are smirched with cooperation with the Nazis are suddenly equated with World War II veterans. I believe that it is unacceptable to equate liberators with occupants. I can only regard the glorification of Nazi collaborators as a betrayal of the memory of our fathers and grandfathers, and a betrayal of the ideals that united peoples in the fight against Nazism.

At that time, the leaders of the USSR, the United States, and the UK faced, without exaggeration, a historic task. Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill represented the countries with different ideologies, state aspirations, interests, and cultures, but they demonstrated great political will, rose above the contradictions and preferences and put the true interests of peace at the forefront. As a result, they were able to come to an agreement and achieve a solution from which all of humanity has benefited.

The victor powers left us a system that has become the quintessence of the intellectual and political quest of several centuries. A series of conferences – Tehran, Yalta, San Francisco and Potsdam – laid the foundation of a world that for 75 years had no global war, despite the sharpest contradictions.

Historical revisionism, the manifestations of which we now observe in the West, primarily with regard to the subject of World War II and its outcome, is dangerous because it grossly and cynically distorts the understanding of the principles of peaceful development laid down at the Yalta and San Francisco conferences in 1945. The major historic achievement of Yalta and other decisions of that time is the agreement to create a mechanism that would

allow the leading powers to remain within the framework of diplomacy in resolving their differences.

The 20th century brought large-scale and comprehensive global conflicts, and in 1945, nuclear weapons capable of physically destroying the Earth also entered the scene. In other words, the settlement of disputes by force has become prohibitively dangerous. The victors in World War II understood that. They understood and were aware of their own responsibility towards humanity.

The cautionary tale of the League of Nations was taken into account in 1945. The structure of the UN Security Council was developed in a way to make peace guarantees as concrete and effective as possible. That is how the institution of the permanent members of the Security Council and the right of the veto as their privilege and responsibility came into being.

What is the power of veto in the UN Security Council? To put it bluntly, it is the only reasonable alternative to a direct confrontation between major countries. It is a statement by one of the five powers that a decision is unacceptable to it and is contrary to its interests and its ideas about the right approach. The other countries, even if they do not agree, take this position as a given, abandoning any attempts to realise their unilateral efforts. It means that in one way or another it is necessary to seek compromises.

A new global confrontation started almost immediately after the end of World War II and was at times very fierce. The fact that the Cold War did not grow into World War III has become a clear testimony of the effectiveness of the agreements concluded by the Big Three. The rules of conduct agreed upon during the creation of the United Nations made it possible to further minimize risks and keep confrontation under control.

Of course, we can see that the UN system currently experiences certain tension in its work and is not as effective as it could be. But the United Nations still performs its primary function. The principles of the UN Security Council are a unique mechanism for preventing a major war or a global conflict.

The calls that have been made quite often in recent years to abolish the power of veto, to deny special opportunities to permanent members of the Security Council are actually irresponsible. After all, if that happens, the United Nations would in essence become the League of Nations – a meeting for empty talk without any leverage on the world processes. It is well known how it ended. That is why the victor powers approached the formation of the new system of the world order with utmost seriousness seeking to avoid repetition of mistakes made by their predecessors.

The creation of the modern system of international relations is one of the major outcomes of World War II. Even the most insurmountable contradictions – geopolitical, ideological, and economic – do not prevent us from finding forms of peaceful coexistence and interaction, if there is the desire and will to do so. Today the world is going through quite a turbulent time. Everything is changing, from the global balance of power and influence to the social, economic and technological foundations of societies, nations and even continents. In the past epochs, shifts of such magnitude have almost never happened without major military conflicts and without a power struggle to build a new global hierarchy. Thanks to the wisdom and farsightedness of the political figures of the Allied Powers, it was possible to create a system that has restrained from extreme manifestations of such objective competition, historically inherent in the world development.

It is a duty of ours – all those who take political responsibility and primarily representatives of the victor powers in World War II – to guarantee that this system is maintained and improved. Today, as in 1945, it is important to demonstrate political will and discuss the future together. Our colleagues – Mr. Xi Jinping, Mr. Macron, Mr. Trump and Mr. Johnson – supported the

Russian initiative to hold a meeting of the leaders of the five nuclear-weapon states, permanent members of the Security Council. We thank them for this and hope that such face-to-face meeting could take place as soon as possible.

What is our vision of the agenda for the upcoming summit? First of all, in our opinion, it would be useful to discuss steps to develop collective principles in world affairs, as well as speak frankly about the issues of preserving peace, strengthening global and regional security, strategic arms control, and joint efforts in countering terrorism, extremism and other major challenges and threats.

A special item on the agenda of the meeting is the situation in the global economy, particularly, overcoming the economic crisis caused by the coronavirus pandemic. Our countries are taking unprecedented measures to protect the health and lives of people and to support citizens who have found themselves in difficult living situations. Our ability to work together and in concert, as real partners, will show how severe the impact of the pandemic will be and how quickly the global economy will emerge from the recession. Moreover, it is unacceptable to turn the economy into an instrument of pressure and confrontation. Popular issues include environmental

protection and combating climate change, as well as ensuring the security of the global information space.

The agenda proposed by Russia for the upcoming summit of the Five is extremely important and relevant both for our countries and for the entire world. We have specific ideas and initiatives on all the items.

There can be no doubt that the summit of Russia, China, France, the United States, and the UK will play an important role in finding common answers to modern challenges and threats, and will demonstrate a common commitment to the spirit of alliance, to those high humanist ideals and values for which our fathers and grandfathers fought shoulder to shoulder.

Drawing on a shared historical memory, we can trust each other and must do so. That will serve as a solid basis for successful negotiations and concerted action for the sake of enhancing the stability and security on the planet, for the sake of prosperity and well-being of all states. Without exaggeration, it is our common duty and responsibility towards the entire world, towards the present and future generations.

ANNEX

Document No. 1

*From the report of Polish Ambassador
to Germany Józef Lipski to
Polish Foreign Minister Józef Beck*

September 20, 1938

The Chancellor, speaking in strict confidence and emphasizing that I can draw appropriate conclusions from this, brought to my attention that even today, in case there arises a conflict between Poland and Czechoslovakia related to our interests in Teschen, the Reich will take our side (I think that the Chancellor had also made a similar statement to the Hungarian Prime Minister, but I was not informed about this). The Chancellor advises that under such circumstances we should act only after the Germans occupy the Sudetes, because then the whole operation would be shorter.

Later, during the conversation, the Chancellor insistently emphasized that Poland was the primary factor protecting Europe from Russia.

Other lengthy statements indicate that:

(a) he did not intend to go beyond the territory of the Sudetes. Of course, in case of a war, he would advance further because, in my opinion, he would have to succumb

to the influence of military elements which, for strategic reasons, push him to make the whole of Czechia dependent on Germany;

(b) beyond the line of known German interests, we have absolutely free hands;

(c) he sees great difficulty in reaching the Hungarian-Romanian agreement (I think the Chancellor may be here under the influence of Horthy's words that I have reported to you orally);

(d) the cost of the Sudeten operation, including fortifications and armaments, reaches 18 billion marks;

(e) once the Sudeten issue is settled, he will raise the issue of colonies;

(f) it dawned upon him that the Jewish issue could be resolved through emigration to colonies in agreement with Poland, Hungary and possibly Romania (here I answered that if he found a solution to this problem we would erect a beautiful monument to him in Warsaw).

Published in Polskie dokumenty dyplomatyczne. 1938. Warszawa, 2007. Dok. № 248; IPMS, MSZ A.11.49/N/7;

Документы и материалы кануна Второй мировой войны. 1937–1939: В 2-х тт. Т. 1: Ноябрь 1937 г. – декабрь 1938 г. – М.: Политиздат, 1981. – С. 177–178 (Documents and Materials of the Eve of World War II. 1937–1939. In 2 volumes. Vol. 1. November 1937 – December 1938. Moscow, Politizdat, 1981. Pages 177–178).

Document No. 2

*From the record of conversation between German
Ambassador to Poland Hans-Adolf von Moltke
and Polish Foreign Minister Józef Beck*

October 1, 1938

Mr. Beck continued that in this context he wanted to ask the German government whether Poland could count on Germany's benevolent attitude in case an armed conflict with Czechoslovakia should occur. He stressed that he did not expect any "action" from us. Mr. Beck further remarked that it was not very likely that the Soviet Union would take action against Poland in the event of a Polish-Czech conflict. Nevertheless, he would be grateful to know whether Germany, as a good neighbor, would take a friendly stance in such event. He believes that he knows the German point of view in general, but it seems to him important to know our position in this specific case.

Mr. Beck also expressed his great gratitude for the loyal treatment accorded to Polish interests at the Munich Conference, as well as the sincerity of relations during the Czech conflict. The Government and the public fully appreciate the position of the Führer and Chancellor

I have promised Mr. Beck that I will pass the information on immediately.

Published in Akten zur deutschen auswärtigen Politik 1918–1945. Serie D 1937-1945. Bd. V. S. 66, 67. Göttingen, 1953;
Документы и материалы по истории советско-польских отношений. Т. VI. 1933–1938 гг. – М.: Наука, 1969. – С. 365 (Documents and Materials on the History of Soviet-Polish Relations. Vol. 6. 1933-1938. Moscow, Nauka, 1969. Page 365).

Document No. 3

From the letter

of Polish Foreign Minister Józef Beck

to Polish Ambassador to Germany Józef Lipski

September 19, 1938

I ask that you adhere to the following directives during your conversation with the Reich Chancellor:

1. The Government of the Republic of Poland states that, due to its position, it has paralyzed the possibility of intervention of the Soviets over the Czech issue in the broadest sense. Our pressure in Bucharest had the desired effect. The maneuvers we were conducting in Volhynia were understood by Moscow as a warning.

2. Poland considers interference by the Soviets in European affairs to be unacceptable.

3. We consider the Czechoslovak Republic to be an artificial entity that suits certain doctrines and combinations, but does not correspond to the real needs and natural rights of the peoples of Central Europe.

4. Over the past year, the Polish government four times rejected the proposal to join the international intervention in defense of Czechoslovakia.

Published in AAN, d. ASMZ, Ambassada RP, Berlin, Dokumenty wybrane, № 415, w. 159, t. 2, str. 224–225;

Документы и материалы кануна Второй мировой войны. 1937–1939. В 2-х тт. Т. 1: Ноябрь 1937 г. – декабрь 1938 г. – М.: Политиздат, 1981. – С. 173 (Documents and Materials of the Eve of World War II. 1937-1939. In 2 volumes. Vol. 1. November 1937 – December 1938. Moscow, Politizdat, 1981. Page 173).

Document No. 4

*From the instructions
for the British delegation to the negotiations
of the military missions of the USSR,
Great Britain and France*

August 2, 1939

8. Until such time as the political agreement is concluded, the Delegation should therefore go very slowly with the conversations, watching the progress of the political negotiations and keeping in very close touch with His Majesty's Ambassador.

[...]

14. Disclosure to the Russians of the details of any technical equipment in the first stage is impossible and discussion of tactical training, if it cannot be avoided, must only take place on the broadest lines during the early stages of the conversations. Disclosure to the Russians at a later stage of details of technical equipment may be necessary, but each item must be considered on its merits and instructions sought before any disclosure is made.

15. The British Government is unwilling to enter into any detailed commitments which are likely to tie our hands in all circumstances. Endeavors 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. This will be difficult as the Russians are sure to press our Delegation for more detailed information and they will have to refer back for instructions when in doubt as to their attitude.

Published in Documents on British Foreign Policy. 1919–1939. Third Series, vol. 6. Pages 762–763;

Документы и материалы кануна Второй мировой войны. 1937–1939. В 2-х тт. Т. 2: Январь – август 1939 г. – М.: Политиздат, 1981. – С. 168–169 (Documents and Materials of the Eve of World War II. 1937-1939. In 2 volumes, Vol. 2. January – August 1939. Moscow, Politizdat, 1981. Pages 168–169).

Document No. 5

*Powers of People's Commissar of Defense
of the USSR and head of the Soviet military mission
Kliment Voroshilov at the
Anglo-Franco-Soviet military talks in Moscow*

August 5, 1939

People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR, Marshal of the Soviet Union Kliment Voroshilov – head of the military delegation of the USSR, which includes the Chief of the Red Army General Staff, Army Commander of the 1st rank Boris Shaposhnikov, People's Commissar of the Navy, Admiral of the Fleet of the 2nd rank Nikolai Kuznetsov, Chief of the Red Army Air Force, Army Commander of the 2nd rank Aleksandr Loktionov and Deputy Chief of the Red Army General Staff, Corps Commander Ivan Smorodinov, is authorized to negotiate with the British and French military missions and sign the military convention on the organization of military defense of England, France and the USSR against aggression in Europe.

Chairman of the Council of People's
Commissars of the Soviet Union

V. Molotov

Administrator of Affairs of the Council of People's
Commissars of the Soviet Union

M. Khlomov

Архив внешней политики Российской Федерации. Ф. 06.
Оп. 16. П. 27. Д. 5. Л. 1. Подлинник. (The Foreign Policy
Archive of the Russian Federation. Fund 06. Inventory 16. Folder
27. File 5. Page 1. The original.)

Document No. 6

*From the report of the French Military Attaché in Poland
Félix Musse to the Minister of National Defense
and Minister of War of France Édouard Daladier*

August 24, 1939

During the night of 22 to 23, instructions from the Quai d'Orsay gave the French Ambassador a mandate to approach once again the Polish Government in an attempt to persuade it to reconsider, if possible, its decision not to give consent, even tacit, to military collaboration with the Soviets. The situation had in fact fundamentally changed; it was now necessary and seemed possible to thwart the German maneuver in Moscow and perhaps even make it partially fail, which would have the effect of reversing the impression produced on the public opinion in various States concerned. But this required Poland to abandon its intransigent position which barred any possibility of negotiation with the Soviets and which it could no longer uphold without assuming the full weight of responsibility.

Mr. Léon Noel made an urgent request to Mr. Beck on August 23 the Minister seemed to hesitate, but he asked to postpone his reply and a new meeting was scheduled for a quarter past noon.

During this second meeting, Mr. Beck gave in, but not without once again showing the deep aversion which the possibility of the entry of the Russian troops inspires in the Poles. He accepted the following wording that specifies the language which General Doumenc is now authorized to use with his Soviet interlocutors: “We have reached certainty that in the event of a joint action against German aggression, cooperation between Poland and the USSR, subject to technical conditions to be determined, is not excluded (or is possible).

The French and British Chiefs of Staff therefore consider that all modalities for collaboration should be explored immediately.”

It seems that such wording opens up sufficient negotiating possibilities for our delegations. On the part of the Poles, this represents a considerable sacrifice which they would have never made if the prospect of the German-Soviet pact had not created an immediate threat requiring urgent countermeasures and justifying a derogation from the peacetime rules.

Российский государственный военный архив. Ф. 198к. Оп. 2. Д. 292. Л. 164–166. Подлинник на франц. яз. Перевод на рус. яз. (The Russian State Military Archive. Fund 198k. Inventory 2. File 292. Pages 164–166. The original in the French language. Translation into Russian.)

Document No. 7

Telegram of Polish Foreign Minister Józef Beck to Polish diplomatic missions

August 23, 1939

In view of the new situation resulting from Ribbentrop's visit to Moscow, the French and English ambassadors in another demarche expressed the wish of their governments that the situation could be changed tactically by restarting military negotiations to limit the possibilities and scope of the German-Soviet Treaty. In this regard, we are once again asked to "tacitly agree" to the military delegations in Moscow expressing their confidence that in the event of war Polish-Soviet military cooperation is not excluded.

I have stated that the Polish Government does not believe in the effectiveness of these steps, but in order to make things easier for the French-English delegation, we have come up with a certain wording, and I reiterated our reservations regarding the passage of troops that are not to be made public.

The wording would be the following: "The French and British Chiefs of Staff are certain that in the event of a joint action against the aggressor, cooperation between Poland and the USSR under certain conditions is not excluded.

Therefore, Chiefs of Staff consider it necessary to draft any plans with the Soviets.”

Using this opportunity, I once again categorically stated that I was not against this wording only for the sake of facilitating tactics, but our principled position with regard to the USSR was final and remained unchanged. I once again reminded that it was inappropriate on the part of the Soviets to discuss our relations with France and England without our involvement.

Published in Międzynarodowe tło agresji Rzeszy Niemieckiej na Polskę w 1939 roku: wybór dokumentów. Warszawa, 1986. S. 156;

Год кризиса. 1938–1939: Документы и материалы: В 2-х тт. Т. 2: 2 июня 1939 г. – 4 сентября 1939 г. – М.: Политиздат, 1990. – С. 317 (Year of Crisis. 1938-1939: Documents and materials: In 2 volumes. Vol. 2: June 2, 1939 – September 4, 1939. Moscow, Politizdat, 1990. Page 317).

Document No. 8

*From the directives for the Berlin trip as recorded
by People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs of the USSR
Vyacheslav Molotov*

[November 9, 1940]

1. The purpose of the trip:

(a) To find out the real intentions of G[ermany] and all participants of the Tripartite Pact (G[ermany], I[taly] and J[apan]) in implementing the plan of creating a "New Europe," as well as the "Gr[eat] E[ast] As[ian] Space"; the boundaries of the "N[ew] Eur[ope]," as well as the "E[ast] As[ian] Sp[ace]"; the nature of the st[ate] structure and the relations between sep[arate] Europ[ean] states in the "N[ew] Eur[ope]" and "E[ast] As[ia]"; the stages and deadlines for implementing these plans and, at l[east], the nearest of them; the prospects of other countries joining the Tripartite Pact; and the place of the USSR in these plans at the present moment and in future.

(b) To prepare an initial outline of the sphere of interests of the USSR in Europe, as well as in the Near and Middle Asia, probing into the possibility of an agreement to that end with G[ermany] (as well as with I[taly]), but not to conclude any agreement with G[ermany] or I[taly] at this

stage of negotiations, bearing in mind the continuation of these negotiations in Moscow, where Rib[bentrop] is to arrive in the near future.

Архив Президента Российской Федерации. Ф. 56. Оп. 1. Д. 1161. Л. 147–155. Подлинник. Автограф В.М. Молотова. (The Archive of the President of the Russian Federation. Fund 56. Inventory 1. File 1161. Page 147–155. The original. V. Molotov's autograph);

Published in Документы внешней политики. 1940 – 22 июня 1941. Т. XXIII: В 2-х кн. – Кн. 2 (1): 1 ноября 1940 – 1 марта 1941. – М.: Международные отношения, 1998. – С. 30–31 (Foreign Policy Documents. 1940–June 22, 1941. Vol. 23: in 2 books. Book 2 (1): November 1, 1940–March 1, 1941. Moscow, International Relations, 1998. Pages 30–31).

Document No. 9

The cypher telegram sent by People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs of the USSR Vyacheslav Molotov to USSR Plenipotentiary Representative in Great Britain Ivan Maisky

November 17, 1940

For your information, this is a brief outline of the Berlin discussions.

1. My visit to Berlin was a return visit to Ribbentrop's two visits to Moscow last year, and it took place at the invitation of the German government.

2. Contrary to some misleading reports by the foreign press, the Berlin discussions mainly concerned Soviet-German relations, the implementation of the agreements concluded last year and the possibilities for further development of Soviet-German relations. Issues regarding the delimitation of the spheres of interest between the USSR, Germany and other countries, as well as those concerning the accession of the USSR to the Tripartite Pact in Berlin were not addressed during these discussions.

3. No agreement was signed or was intended to be signed in Berlin. We just exchanged our views in Berlin, as is evident from the well-known communiqué of November 10, and that was all.

4. Later on, a number of issues on which the exchange of views took place in Berlin may be considered under normal diplomatic procedure.

5. As it turned out from the conversations, the Germans want to lay their hands on Turkey under the guise of guaranteeing its safety similarly to Romania, and to raise false hopes in us by promising a revision of the Montreux Convention in our favor; what is more, they suggest we help them with this. We did not agree to that, because we believe that, firstly, Turkey should remain independent, and secondly, the regime in the Straits can be improved through our negotiations with Turkey, but not behind Turkey's back.

6. Apparently, the Germans and the Japanese seem anxious to push us towards the Gulf and India. We declined the discussion of this matter as we consider such advice on the part of Germany to be inappropriate.

Molotov

Архив внешней политики Российской Федерации. Ф. 059. Оп. 1. П. 326. Д. 2239. Л. 112–114. Подлинник. (The Foreign Policy Archive of the Russian Federation. Fund 059. Inventory 1. Folder 326. File 2239. Pages 112-114. The original);

Published in Документы внешней политики. 1940 – 22 июня 1941. – Т. XXIII: В 2 кн. – Кн. 2 (1): 1 ноября 1940 – 1 марта 1941. – М.: Международные отношения, 1998. – С. 92 (Foreign Policy Documents. 1940–June 22, 1941. Vol. 23: in 2 books. Book 2 (1): November 1, 1940–March 1, 1941. Moscow, International Relations, 1998. Page 92).

Document No. 10

From Churchill's memoirs

In a broadcast on October 1, I said:

Poland has again been overrun by two of the Great Powers which held her in bondage for a hundred and fifty years, but were unable to quench the spirit of the Polish nation. The heroic defense of Warsaw shows that the soul of Poland is indestructible, and that she will rise again like a rock, which may for a time be submerged by a tidal wave, but which remains a rock.

Russia has pursued a cold policy of self-interest. We could have wished that the Russian armies should be standing on their present line as the friends and allies of Poland instead of as invaders. But that the Russian armies should be standing on this line was clearly necessary for the safety of Russia against the Nazi menace. At any rate, the line is there, and an Eastern Front has been created which Nazi Germany does not dare assail...

I cannot forecast to you the action of Russia. It is a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma; but perhaps there is a key. That key is Russian national interest. It cannot be in accordance with the interest or the safety of Russia that Germany should plant herself upon the shores of the

Black Sea, or that she should overrun the Balkan States and subjugate the Slavonic peoples of Southeastern Europe. That would be contrary to the historic life-interests of Russia.”

The Prime Minister was in full agreement. “I take the same view as Winston,” he said, in a letter to his sister, “to whose excellent broadcast we have just been listening. I believe Russia will always act as she thinks her own interests demand, and I cannot believe she would think her interests served by a German victory followed by a German domination of Europe.”

Published in Churchill W.S. The Second World War. – London-Toronto, Cassell and Co Ltd., 1950. – Vol.1. The Gathering Storm. Page 449;

Черчилль У. Вторая мировая война: В 6 тт. Т. 1: Надвигающаяся буря. – М., 1997. – С. 217–218 (Churchill W. The Second World War. In 6 volumes. Vol. 1. The Gathering Storm. Moscow, 1997. Pages 217–218).

Document No. 11

*From the cypher telegram of Plenipotentiary
Representative of the USSR in Great Britain Ivan Maisky
to the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs
of the USSR*

October 17, 1939

I had breakfast with Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Richard Austen Butler today. From the conversation with him, I would like to point out the following:

(1) War or peace. The general attitude of the British government, according to Butler, is that it would be ready to make peace even tomorrow if it were sure that the agreement reached had a stable character ("would ensure peace and tranquility for 20–25 years" as Butler put it). Such confidence, according to the British government, could only be created if a peace treaty were guaranteed by all the great powers, including the United States and the USSR. In order to achieve a lasting peace of this kind, the British government would be ready to make significant concessions to Germany, even in the matter of colonies. Since such peace cannot be expected at the present moment, England will continue the war, relying on the superiority of its resources over the German ones.

[...]

(2) Poland. Butler said that Zaleski who recently arrived in London [Foreign Minister of the Polish Government in Exile] did not claim to return Western Ukraine and Belarus to “the future Poland,” but demanded East Prussia, indicating that strategic position of Poland would not have been possible without this. Zaleski sought a certain promise from the British government about the borders of “the future Poland,” but the latter found it inconvenient to bind itself to such a promise. According to Butler, the British government circles believed there could be no question of returning Western Ukraine and Belarus to Poland. If it were possible to create an ethnographic Poland of a modest size (like the “Duchy of Warsaw” at the times of Napoleon) with a guarantee not only of the USSR and Germany, but also of England and France, the British government would consider itself quite satisfied.

Архив внешней политики Российской Федерации. Ф. 059. Оп. 1. П. 300. Д. 2078. Л. 176–177. Подлинник. (The Foreign Policy Archive of the Russian Federation. Fund 059. Inventory 1. Folder 300. File 2078. Pages 176–177. The original).

Document No. 12

*From the cypher telegram of Plenipotentiary Representative
of the USSR in Great Britain Ivan Maisky
to the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs of the USSR*

October 27, 1939

1. I had breakfast with Chamberlain's chief advisor (and actually the head of his foreign policy), the famous Horace Wilson. The conversation revolved mainly around the issue of war and peace. Wilson spoke in the sense that now that the war in the West has not yet begun in earnest and the passions of the masses have not yet reached boiling point, in theory the question of peace can still be raised. Six or twelve months later, it will be much harder to do so. But even at this moment, according to Wilson, it is almost impossible to approach the problem in practice.

[...]

2. Wilson's judgment of the desirable, in his point of view, contours of a future peace treaty which is to be concluded after a more or less long war, speaks volumes. The current centralized Germany would have to become a "loose federation" in which Austria, Bavaria, Württemberg and so on would have to enjoy wide autonomy. Czechoslovakia could also become a member of this federation, roughly as

a British dominion. Poland would have to be restored as an independent state on its own ethnographic basis, but without Western Ukraine and Belarus. Federal Germany could be given condominium rights with England and France over its former colonies. The entire peace treaty would have to be guaranteed, if possible, by all great powers, especially the great European powers. That would be followed by a major arms reduction for all.

3. Wilson “complained” that France had a much harsher position towards Germany as compared to England. Thus, the British government is always trying to draw a line between Hitler’s regime and the German people. The French, on the contrary, do not want to make such a distinction, declaring that the goal of the war is not only the total striking defeat, but also the fragmentation of Germany into a number of small states, unarmed and helpless; French sentiment, according to Wilson, cannot but have a certain influence on the line of English politics. Th[is] is easy to believe.

Архив внешней политики Российской Федерации. Ф. 059. Оп. 1. П. 300. Д. 2078. Л. 209–211. Подлинник. (The Foreign Policy Archive of the Russian Federation. Fund 059. Inventory 1. Folder 300. File 2078. Pages 209–211. The original);
Published in Документы внешней политики. 1939. – Т. XXII: В 2 кн. Кн. 2: Сентябрь–декабрь. – М.: Международные отношения, 1992. С. 234–235 (Foreign Policy Documents. 1939. Vol. 22: in 2 books. Book 2: September–December. Moscow, International Relations, 1992. Pages 234–235).

Document No. 13

*From the cypher telegram of Plenipotentiary
Representative of the USSR in Great Britain Ivan Maisky
to the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs
of the USSR*

October 7, 1939

1. Yesterday at 10 p.m. Churchill invited me to the Admiralty and spoke about the state of Anglo-Soviet relations. [...] Churchill's basic thoughts and statements can be summarized as follows.

2. Relations between England and the USSR have always been poisoned by mutual suspicions, and now more than usual. England suspects the USSR of concluding a military alliance with Germany, with all the consequences that this entails. Churchill personally does not believe it, however this sentiment is very common in the British political and even government circles, and undoubtedly has an impact on the tone of its relationship with the USSR. On the other hand, Churchill has the impression that the USSR suspects England of some hostile machinations in the Baltics, the Balkans and so on, and this, too, impacts the attitude of the USSR towards England. Churchill, knowing very well the history of the Anglo-French-Soviet pact negotiations,

considers that the British government was negotiating very badly (he had not concealed his opinion on this issue before), and understands that the course and outcome of negotiations should have aggravated our suspicions, but the past is the past. Churchill is more interested in the present and the future. In order to dispel our suspicions as far as possible, and to help improve Anglo-Soviet relations in the future, he finds it useful to clarify the British government's view of the current events.

3. Churchill proceeds from the position which he has long advocated that nowadays major interests of England and the USSR in no way come into collision. The initial shock caused by the Soviet-German non-aggression pact and the subsequent events made many people in England lose their self-possession and deprived them of the ability to see things in their true perspective. Much has now changed. From the perspective of England's well understood interests, the fact that the entire east and south-east of Europe is out of war is not a negative, but a positive one. Similarly, England has no reason to object to the actions of the USSR in the Baltics. Of course, some liberal and labor sentimentalists may weep over the "Russian protectorate" over Estonia or Latvia, but this cannot be taken seriously. Churchill understands perfectly well that the USSR should have control over the

eastern shores of the Baltic Sea, and he is very happy that the Baltic countries are included in our state system, not in the German one. This is historically normal and, what is more, this reduces the possible “lebensraum” [living space] for Hitler. Here again, the interests of England and the USSR do not collide, but rather coincide.

[...]

5. On the basis of all the above considerations, Churchill believes that there are currently, as in all recent years, no serious contradictions between the UK and the USSR, and therefore there is no reason for strained or unsatisfactory relations. “Stalin,” Churchill remarked, “is now playing a big game and playing it happily. He can be pleased. But I cannot see why we should be displeased.” The British government considers our declaration of neutrality a positive fact and would very much like it to be friendly neutrality. It is eager to develop trade relations with us. It is also willing to discuss any other measures that might improve the relationships. In this regard, Churchill began to ask me what measures I could suggest or advice, but I, for obvious reasons, avoided answering his questions. I only asked whether everything he had told me during our conversation was his individual opinion or whether it was also the opinion of the whole Cabinet. Churchill said that,

although the Cabinet could not, of course, be responsible for every nuance of what he had said, his point of view for the most part represented the position of the Government as a whole.

Архив внешней политики Российской Федерации. Ф. 059. Оп. 1. П. 300. Д. 2078. Л. 144–149. Подлинник. (The Foreign Policy Archive of the Russian Federation. Fund 059. Inventory 1. Folder 300. File 2078. Pages 144–149. The original);
Published in Документы внешней политики. 1939. – Т. XXII: В 2 кн. – Кн. 2: Сентябрь-декабрь. – М.: Международные отношения, 1992. С. 167–169 (Foreign Policy Documents. 1939. Vol. 22: in 2 books. Book 2: September–December. Moscow, International Relations, 1992. Pages 167–169).

Document No. 14

From the minutes of Adolf Hitler's meeting with the leaders of the Reich on the objectives of the war against the USSR

July 16, 1941

By order of the Fuhrer, today at 3 p.m., he had a meeting with Reichslater Rosenberg, Reichsminister Lammers, Field Marshal Keitel, Reichsmarshal [Göring] and me [Bormann].

The meeting began at 3 p.m. and lasted until approximately 8 p.m.

In his opening speech, the Fuhrer stressed that he wanted to formulate a few basic provisions.

...We are talking about the following:

...Crimea should be liberated from all strangers and should be populated by the Germans. In the same way, Austrian Galicia should become part of the German Empire.

...The Russians have now issued an order for partisan warfare in our rear. This partisan war has some advantages: it gives us an opportunity to destroy everything that opposes us.

The most important thing:

The formation of a military power west of the Urals should never be on the agenda again even if we had to wage

a war for a hundred years to achieve this. All successors of the Fuhrer must know that the Empire will only be safe if there is no foreign force west of the Urals. Germany takes over the protection of that area from all possible dangers. The iron principle must be: “No one other than the Germans should ever be allowed to carry weapons!”

This is especially important. Even if in the near future it would seem easier to attract some foreign, subordinate nations for armed assistance, this would be wrong. One day it would certainly and inevitably turn against us. Only a German has the right to carry weapons, not a Slav, a Czech, a Cossack or an Ukrainian.

...The Reichsmarshal thinks it is right to incorporate various parts of the Baltic states to Eastern Prussia, for example Bialystok forests.

The Fuhrer emphasizes that all Baltic states should become part of the Reich.

Likewise, Crimea and the adjoining areas (north of Crimea) should also be incorporated into the Reich. These adjoining areas should be as large as possible.

...The Fuhrer further emphasizes that the Volga colonies should become part of the Empire, as well as the Baku region. It should become a German concession (military colony).

The Finns want to get Eastern Karelia. However, due to large deposits of nickel, the Kola Peninsula should be ceded to Germany. The joining of Finland as an allied state should be prepared with due caution. The Finns lay claims to the Leningrad region. The Fuhrer wants to raze Leningrad to the ground and then give it to the Finns.

Государственный архив Российской Федерации. Ф. Р-7445. Оп. 2. Д. 162. Л. 433–443. На немецком яз. (The State Archive of the Russian Federation. Fund P-7445. Inventory 2. File 162. Pages 433–443. In the German language);

Published in: Trial the Major War Criminals before the International Military Tribunal. Nuremberg 14 November 1945 – 1 October 1946. XXXVIII. Nuremberg, 1949. S. 86–94;

Fall Barbarossa. Dokumente zur Vorbereitung der faschistischen Wehrmacht auf die Aggression gegen die Sowjetunion (1940/41). Berlin, 1970. S. 331–335;

Преступные цели – преступные средства. Документы об оккупационной политике фашистской Германии на территории СССР (1941-1944 гг.). – М.: Экономика, 1985. – С. 47–51 (Criminal purposes – criminal means. Documents on the occupation policy of fascist Germany in the USSR (1941–1944). Moscow, Ekonomika, 1985. Pages 47–51).

Document No. 15

*From comments and proposals of the Eastern Ministry
on the Master Plan for the East*

April 27, 1942

Regarding the further treatment of the Russian population:

This is not only about defeating the state with its center in Moscow. Achieving this historic goal would never mean solving the problem completely. The matter is most likely to defeat the Russians as a nation, to divide them.

...we need to follow different paths to solve the Russian problem. In short, these paths are as follows.

(a) First of all, it is necessary to divide the territory inhabited by Russians into different political areas with their own governing bodies to ensure a separate national development in each of them...

Published in Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte, 1958, № 3; Дашичев В.И. Банкротство стратегии германского фашизма. Исторические очерки. Документы и материалы. В 2-х тт. Т. 2. Агрессия против СССР. Падение «Третьей империи». 1941–1945 гг. – М.: Издательство «Наука», 1973. – С. 36–37 (Bankruptcy of the German fascism strategy. Historical essays. Documents and materials. Vyacheslav Dashichev. In 2 volumes. Volume 2. Aggression against the USSR. Fall of the «Third Empire, 1941–1945. Moscow, Nauka, 1973, pages 36–37).

Document No. 16

*From the draft report by Ivan Maisky on the formula
for reparations from Germany*

February 4, 1945

To Comrade Vyacheslav Molotov

...I am sending you a slightly amended and revised draft formula on reparations from Germany, as instructed by Comrade Stalin on January 25 (during a conversation after the reception of the English delegation in Moscow). The second copy please hand over to Comrade Stalin.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE VICTORY OVER
THE ENEMY

If we calculate, using the available data, how many armed forces and for how long Germany had to spend on fighting against the USSR, on the one hand, and against the UK, France and the USA, on the other hand, throughout the war (from September 4, 1939 to January 1, 1945), we will get the following:

1) Ground forces

From June 22, 1941, to January 1, 1945, on the Soviet-German front Germany spent 5,243 million soldier-days.

From September 4, 1939, to January 1, 1945, outside the Soviet front in the fight against the UK, France and the United States Germany spent 894 million soldier-days.

Total: 6,137 million

In other words, the UK, France and the United States account for only 14.5 percent of soldier-days spent by Germany in the fight against its main enemies. The USSR, on the contrary, accounts for 85.5 percent, i.e. almost 6 times more. These are absolute figures.

When compared with the population of the mentioned countries, we get the following relative figures:

| | Population /million/ | Soldier- days /million/ | On average, soldier- days per 1 million population |
|---|-------------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| USSR | 193 | 5,243 | 27,1 |
| UK, France, United States | | | |
| /a/ Parent states only | 218 | 894 | 4,1 |
| /b/ Parent states and empires' white population | 242 | 894 | 3,5 |
| /c/ Parent states and empires | 750 | 894 | 1,2 |

Assuming the number of soldier-days per 1 million inhabitants of the USSR as 100, the relevant figures for the UK, France and the USA will be as follows:

| | |
|--|-----|
| USSR..... | 100 |
| UK, France, United States: | |
| /a/ Parent states only..... | 15 |
| /b/ Parent states and empires' white population..... | 13 |
| /c/ Parent states and empires..... | 4 |

It seems clear that even in the most favorable case for our allies /that is, if we take only one population of parent states/ the relative Germany's expenses of soldier-days on the Soviet-German front are almost seven times higher than those on other allied fronts. If we take the least favorable case for our allies /that is, if we take into account the population of their empires as a whole/, it turns out that the number of soldier-days spent by Germany on the Soviet front is 25 times higher than that number on other allied fronts. Therefore, it would be no exaggeration to claim that the expenses of German forces on the Soviet front are at least ten times higher than on other allied fronts.

2) Tanks

The average monthly number of German tanks and self-propelled mounts on the Soviet-German front and on the allied fronts /UK, France, United States/ was:

| | Soviet-German front | | Allied fronts | |
|--------------------|---------------------|----|-----------------|----|
| | Absolute number | % | Absolute number | % |
| 1941 | 5,900 | 84 | 1,100 | 16 |
| 1942 | 4,810 | 81 | 1,090 | 19 |
| 1943 | 4,520 | 80 | 1,080 | 20 |
| 1944 | 3,770 | 72 | 1,500 | 28 |
| January 1, 1945 | 5,720 | 84 | 1,100 | 16 |

The figures show that, on average, for four years about four-fifths of all German tank forces were on the German-Soviet front and only about one fifth on the Allied fronts.

3) Aircrafts

The average monthly number of German aircrafts on the Soviet-German and allied fronts was:

| | Soviet-German front | | Allied fronts | |
|--------------------|---------------------|----|-----------------|----|
| | Absolute number | % | Absolute number | % |
| 1941 | 2,600 | 70 | 1,100 | 30 |
| 1942 | 2,500 | 71 | 1,000 | 29 |
| 1943 | 2,500 | 64 | 1,400 | 36 |
| 1944 | 2,000 | 56 | 1,600 | 44 |
| January 1, 1945 | 1,700 | 52 | 1,600 | 48 |

The figures show that, on average, for four years about two-thirds of all German air forces was on the German-Soviet front and only about one third on the allied fronts.

4) Conclusion

Thus, the number of soldier-days spent by Germany on the Soviet front is at least ten times higher than on all other allied fronts. During the last three and a half years, the Soviet front also drew back four-fifths of German tanks and about two-thirds of German aircraft.

Even if we make an adjustment for the activities of the allied fleet, as well as for the combat operations of other nations /Belgium, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland and Greece/, we can still rightfully say that the contribution of the USSR in the defeat of the enemy was not less than 75 percent of the total amount of allied efforts dedicated to this goal.

Архив внешней политики Российской Федерации. Ф. 06. Оп. 7а. П. 59. Д. 38. Л. 66, 78–80 (The Foreign Policy Archive of the Russian Federation. Fund 06. Inventory 7a. Folder 59. File 38. Pages 66, 78–80).

Document No. 17

From Franklin Roosevelt's address to U.S. citizens

April 28, 1942

On the European front the most important development of the past year has been without question the crushing counter-offensive on the part of the great armies of Russia against the powerful German army. These Russian forces have destroyed and are destroying more armed power of our enemies – troops, planes, tanks and guns – than all the other United Nations put together.

Published in Fireside Chat 21: On Sacrifice (April 28, 1942)
Franklin D. Roosevelt;

Рузвельт Ф. Беседы у камина. О кризисе, олигархах и войне.
– М.: Алгоритм, 2012. – С. 222 (Roosevelt F. Fireside Chats.
About the crisis, oligarchs and the war. Moscow, Algorithm,
2012. Page 222).

Document No. 18

*From personal, secret and most private message
from Winston Churchill to Joseph Stalin*

September 27, 1944

1. I was gratified to hear from Ambassador Sir Archibald Clark Kerr the praise which you gave to the British and American operations in France. We value very much such expressions from the Leader of the heroic Russian armies. I shall take the occasion to repeat tomorrow in the House of Commons what I have said before, that it is the Russian army that tore the guts out of the German military machine and is at the present moment holding by far the larger portion of the enemy on its front.

2. I have just returned from long talks with the President and I can assure you of our intense conviction that on the agreement of our three nations, Britain, the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, stand the hopes of the world.

Российский государственный архив социально-политической истории. Ф. 558. Оп. 11. Д. 269. Л. 5. Подлинник. Перевод с англ. яз. (The Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History. Fund 558. Inventory 11. File 269. Page 5. The original. Translation from the English language);

Published in Печатнов В.О., Магадеев И.Э. Переписка И.В. Сталина с Ф. Рузвельтом и У. Черчиллем в годы Великой Отечественной войны. Документальное исследование: В 2-х тт. Т. 2– М.: ОЛМА Медиа Групп, 2015. – С. 265 (Correspondence between I.V. Stalin, F. Roosevelt and W. Churchill during the Great Patriotic War: Documental research. Vladimir Pechatnov and Iskander Magadeev. In 2 volumes, Vol. 2. Moscow, OLMA Media Group, 2015. Page 265).

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