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DOCUMENT

Minutes of the Soviet-Estonian Negotiations for the Mutual Assistance Pact of 1939

(Translated, from Estonian)

[See also: "[Negotiating in the Kremlin: The Esotnian Experience of 1939](#)".]

MINUTES OF NEGOTIATIONS AT THE KREMLIN ON SEPTEMBER 24-25, 1939

The Foreign Minister of Estonia K. Selter with his wife arrived in Moscow 9/24/39 at 4 P. M. upon invitation of the Soviet Government. With him came the Director of the Division of Commerce of the Ministry of Economic Affairs E. Uuema. At the station to receive him, besides the Estonian Minister A. Rei and his wife, were other officials of the Legation, and such representatives from the Soviet Union, as customarily have been meeting the foreign ministers of ether countries recently (for instance lately the German Foreign Minister).

The same evening at 9 o'clock the Chairman of the People's Commissars and Foreign Commissar Molotov received the Estonian Foreign Minister at the Kremlin. At the reception were Estonian Minister A. Rei, Trade Commissar of the Soviet Union Mikojan.

The first part of the conversation revolved around the commerce between Estonia and the Soviet Union, whereby it was recalled that Minister Selter had been in the Soviet Union in 1934, concluding a commercial treaty which brought a change in the trade relations of both countries that have been developing smoothly and satisfactorily. At this point Molotov led the conversation to the political field as follows:

W. Molotov: The commercial relations seem to be in order and the new commercial treaty, for the formal signing of which the Soviet Government has invited you to visit Moscow, is ready. But the political relations between the Soviet Union and Estonia are not in order, they are bad. The escape of the interned Polish submarine from Tallinn shows that the Estonian Government does not care very much about the security of the Soviet Union. The Estonian Government either does not want or is not able to keep order in its country and thereby endangers the security of the Soviet Union. The written explanation of the Estonian Government given in this matter through Minister A. Rei is not enough. Ycu admit that there were certain failures in the mechanism of the submarine. Consequently — and this is confirmed by our information — the interned submarine was repaired in Tallinn, was supplied with fuel, 6 torpedoes were left aboard, and was then permitted to leave. The explanation of the Estonian Government does not refute this suspicion. In this manner a submarine has gone to sea from which the Soviet Union can fear an attack upon its shipping. The Soviet Union, having great interests in the Baltic Sea: the large port of Leningrad, a large merchant marine and also a large navy, is not in any way protected against such surprises also in the future. The mouth of the Gulf of Finland is in the hands of other countries and the Soviet Union has to be satisfied with what other countries are doing at that entrance. That cannot continue in this way. It is necessary to give to the Soviet Union effective guaranties for the protection of her security. The Politbureau of the Party and the Government of the Soviet Union have decided to demand from the Estonian Government these guaranties and for that purpose to suggest to conclude a military alliance, or mutual assistance pact, which would give to the Soviet Union the right to have on Estonian territory naval and air support points or bases.

K. Selter: The mutual relations between Estonia and the Soviet Union have been constantly good. I have come here also for the purpose of emphasizing those good-neighborly relations.

As far as the new issues are concerned which you have brought up, permit me first of all to mention that during the period of internment and also escape of the submarine there did not exist officially a state of war between the Soviet Union and Poland. Therefore, in the first place there would arise the question whether and to what extent could the Government of the Soviet Union reproach Estonia about the infringement of any international rules and base any demands upon the fact of infringement of these rules. If we are speaking about the rules of neutrality, then the entry of submarines of the belligerent parties into harbors of Estonia, as a neutral country, is prohibited, except for certain special cases. Sea peril, that is also a mechanical breakdown, is a special case. This situation was known to the Soviet Union. In our explanation it is stated that the submarine based its reason for entry upon sea peril and demanded its release. However, the Estonian Government found that the mechanical failures did not prevent the vessel from moving and therefore did not correspond to

the meaning of sea peril. Only the fact that the vessel would not have been able to move because of mechanical failures, it would not have been possible to intern it. Therefore there is no basis for the accusation that the interned vessel has been put in order by Estonia. Whether the failures which have occurred in the mechanism have for the present moment been eliminated, that we do not know.

As to the escape of the Polish submarine, I can assure once more that in this incident there is no basis for suspecting the Government of Estonia either in connivance or negligence. To the contrary, the Estonian Government and authorities have in their best judgement taken measures for holding the vessel. If it nevertheless has escaped, then it has been to a great extent a misfortune which we ourselves regret most. However, in no way can it be concluded from this case that the Government of Estonia is not able to protect its neutrality, or, as you have stated, to keep order in Estonia. Much less would it be possible to draw from this case any extensive conclusions with respect to Estonian-Soviet Russian relations.

I can add that a judicial inquiry into the escape of the submarine is in progress and it would be advisable to await the results thereof.

However, as to the question you have raised concerning a mutual assistance pact and bases, I am not authorized to talk about it. But I can say that these proposals are directly contrary to the policy of neutrality towards all countries in general which has been so impeccably followed by Estonia heretofore and especially during the last years. This policy is so deep-rooted in our country that I am convinced that Estonia does not want to depart from this neutrality policy course nor does she want to conclude a military alliance with a great power, in this case the Soviet Union, even if it is called a mutual assistance pact.

W. Molotov: Who does not want? You do not want; the ruling group does not want, but the large masses in Estonia and the people want. This is known to us.

K. Selter: I dare contend that neutrality and non-entanglement with the politics of large powers is the deep political conviction of the overwhelming majority of our people which they do not want to abandon.

A. Rei: Neutrality has been the leading foreign policy of Estonia already since the year 1920.

W. Molotov: But you have a military alliance with Latvia. You can have the same relations with the Soviet Union.

A. Rei: Latvia is a small country, but the Soviet Union a great power. The treaty of alliance between Estonia and Latvia is not inconsistent with the neutrality of either country, because we consider the Estonian-Latvian neutrality as a common entity. A treaty of alliance with a great power could easily make the small country dependent upon the great power and be detrimental to its independence.

K. Selter: A relationship of military alliance with a great power would affect the free exercise of the sovereignty rights of Estonia and would be detrimental to the peaceful progress of our country and people. These harmful consequences would be especially evident in the present circumstances where the Soviet Union as an ally would establish on Estonian territory her naval and air support points. The 20-year development of the state of Estonia has so clearly proved the right of the Estonian people to live as a sovereign and independent nation that this right cannot be impaired in this way for the benefit of another state.

W. Molotov: Do not be afraid: the assistance pact with the Soviet Union would not bring you any perils. We do not want to impair your sovereignty or form of government. We are not going to force communism upon Estonia. We do not want to hurt the economic system of Estonia. Estonia will retain her independence, her government, parliament, foreign and domestic policy, army and economic system. We are not going to touch all this.

K. Selter: Regardless of these assurances, I maintain my position. The relations of Estonia and the Soviet Union are governed by the Peace Treaty and the Non-Aggression Treaty. On their basis both parties have been able to live and progress, and it would be completely incomprehensible to Estonia why it would be necessary to search for new bases. The incident with the submarine which you have raised is too trivial and casuistic for making such radical demands upon Estonia.

W. Molotov: We consider this submarine affair very important in itself as a symptom. This boat at sea can do much harm to shipping of the Soviet Union. The affair of this boat shows also that the Soviet Union lacks securities which she urgently needs. In this sense the present situation is unnatural. The Soviet Union would have to be content with a small corner of the Gulf of Finland. Twenty years ago you made us sit in this Finnish "puddle". You don't think that this can last so forever. Then the Soviet Union was powerless, but in the meantime she has greatly grown economically and culturally and also militarily. The Soviet Union is now a great power whose interests need to be taken into consideration. I tell you — the Soviet Union needs enlargement of her security guaranty system; for this purpose she needs an exit to the Baltic Sea. If you do not want to conclude with us a mutual assistance pact, then we have to use for guarantying our security other ways, perhaps more drastic; perhaps more complicated. I ask you, do not compel us to use force against Estonia. The demands of the Soviet Union are not in contradiction with the obligations which the Soviet Union has previously taken

upon herself; they develop them by assuring the security which the existing agreements were supposed to give but unfortunately have not given.

K. Selter: I remark first of all that the Estonian-Russian peace treaty has not been a condition forced upon the Soviet Union, but a just peace. The non-aggression pact has greatly developed the then peaceful relations, and, in our opinion, it should also now be the unshakable guide. We have always been of the opinion that this neutrality of Estonia, as well as the fact that Estonia has not bound herself with any great power or group of great powers, has been of benefit also to the Soviet Union, because with it Estonia has contributed to the pacification of the shores of the Baltic Sea. Our policy heretofore has been directed towards pacification of our region by following a road of neutral, friendly intercourse and avoidance of tension in foreign policy. For the achievement of that goal we have considered as appropriate only such passive treaties as non-aggression treaties. We are afraid that as soon as we shall conclude with a great power, for instance the Soviet Union, a treaty of alliance, we shall place ourselves in the eyes of other countries under a serious suspicion and shall violate the normal, balanced relationship on the Baltic Sea to such a degree that through this fact we shall risk being torn apart in disputes between countries. From these disputes, which sooner or later would unavoidably arise, Estonia as well as other countries bordering on the Baltic Sea would suffer. Of that we are convinced. Adhering to the sure peaceful line of our foreign policy, of which I have spoken before, we have concluded, for instance, a non-aggression pact also with Germany, and in our opinion there is no danger threatening Estonia or the Soviet Union through Estonia. We believe that therewith we have performed a meritorious service to the security of the Baltic shores. Your proposal, however, is in a certain contradiction to the Estonian-German non-aggression treaty, that is to the efforts of pacification which this treaty proclaims.

W. Molotov: Against that we have nothing to say. The Soviet Union has friendly relations with Germany and in order to eliminate the great possibilities of conflict and to stabilize peace in Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union has concluded a non-aggression treaty with Germany. If you are afraid of a contradiction between the Estonian-German non-aggression treaty and the Soviet Union's demands, then I can assure you that Germany will give her consent to the conclusion of an Estonian-Soviet mutual assistance pact. If you wish, I will procure this consent. However, the Soviet Union considers the conclusion of such a mutual assistance pact absolutely necessary.

K. Selter: I am expressing the general ideas of Estonian foreign policy and not questions concerning one or another country at a given moment. These general principles are valid also in respect to other countries which we have not even mentioned by name. The Estonian-German non-aggression pact I have mentioned only as a concrete example of the media through which we have so far successfully contributed to the stabilization of peace on the Baltic shores.

A. Rei: If the relations between the Soviet Union and Germany are based on the non-aggression treaty, there is, of course, no danger on the Baltic Sea. Against whom should the Soviet Union protect herself through a mutual assistance pact and bases?

W. Molotov: Our treaty with Germany is valid for a fixed period. Thus, neither we nor Germany are laying down our arms. In the future the forces of other great powers may come into the Baltic Sea and endanger the Soviet Union. The Polish-German war has shown that a great power cannot entrust her security to others. The events also show that the security of Soviet shipping in the Baltic Sea is not adequate, wherefore it is natural that the Soviet Union should assume herself the safeguarding of this security.

A. Rei: What "other great power" do you mean?

Mikojan: For instance — Great Britain.

K. Selter: Although, in our opinion, we have stated the position of Estonia with sufficient clarity, nevertheless, taking into account the importance of the question, I want to report to my Government the contents of today's conversation.

W. Molotov: This matter cannot be delayed. I will give you a direct connection with Tallinn and we continue our discussions right away, just as we have done with the German foreign minister.

K. Selter: As a minister responsible to Parliament I have to inform beside my President and Government also the Parliament and that cannot be done by telephone or so quickly. For that purpose I shall return to Tallinn already tomorrow.

W. Molotov: I stress once more: the matter is urgent. The situation needs immediate solution. We cannot wait long. I advise you to accede to the wishes of the Soviet Union *in order to avoid something worse. Do not compel the Soviet Union to use force in order to achieve her aims.* In considering our proposal do not rely on England or Germany. England is not able to do anything in the Baltic Sea and Germany is, due to the war, tied up in the West. At present all hope for foreign assistance would be an illusion. Thus you can be sure that the Soviet Union in one way or another will see to her security. *If you would not acquiesce in our proposal, the Soviet Union would carry out the safeguarding of her security in another way, according to her own discretion, without Estonia's assent.*

The conversation ended at 10.15 P.M.

Having left the Kremlin the Foreign Minister and Minister A. Rei drove to the Legation and began making arrangements for the return flight of the Foreign Minister with the first plane which was scheduled to leave the next morning. After about 30 minutes a call from the Kremlin informed that Mr. Molotov requested Minister Selter to return at 12 o'clock midnight.

II

The same night at 12 o'clock Foreign Minister Selter and Minister A. Rei were in the Kremlin for the second time. Representing the Soviet Union were W. Molotov and Mikojan.

Molotov states that he has prepared a written draft of the agreement, including the additional protocol, which the Soviet Union proposes to Estonia for conclusion. By taking the draft as basis for the discussions, the discussions would proceed more rapidly. At the same time he gives some general explanation about the proposal (draft), stating: 1) the wording of the draft is preliminary and can be amended in the discussions; 2) the Soviet Union strives only for those strategic goals which are necessary to safeguard her security; but the sovereignty of the Estonian state, its form of government, also the economic system must remain untouched — ideas which are embodied in the additional protocol to the draft.

Foreign Minister Selter declares that although in principle he must argue against this proposal and is not authorized to conduct negotiations in this respect, nevertheless he will present a few questions for the purpose of clarifying the contents of the proposal. Without this clarification it might be difficult for him to report in Tallinn what the Government of the Soviet Union has meant in different articles.

W. Molotov: asks to present questions.

K. Selter asks: Section 1 of the draft speaks of mutual assistance in case the other contracting party is attacked by a third European state, or in case the security of the other contracting party is threatened by a third European state. Could such a third European state be, for instance, also Rumania? In the affirmative case — how could Estonia's assistance to the Soviet Union be conceived in such an event?

W. Molotov replies: No. Meant is an attack or threat in the Baltic region only. The draft can accordingly be made precise.

K. Selter asks: Could the "threat to the security" mentioned in Section 1 of the draft be anything else but an outside attack? In the affirmative case — how to explain the meaning of "threat to the security" which is very indefinite? As to the meaning of "attack" there are certain rules in the existing legal norms, but the meaning of a threat to security seems to be extremely vague.

W. Molotov replies: Meant is an outside attack, as a situation where a third state threatens the security of the Soviet Union or Estonia.

K. Selter: With what could this third state threaten the security? The meaning of security is so broad that it touches on economic, cultural, and internal policy questions. On such a broad sphere it might be too difficult or too easy to define *casus foederis*. Foreign military assistance might be necessary only in case of a military attack, in other circumstances every state can take care itself of a "threat to security".

W. Molotov: But the situation might be such that an attack has not yet occurred, but there is a threat of attack.

K. Selter asks: Would the assistance take place automatically or at the request of the other party. In case of an obligation of automatic assistance a situation might arise where Estonia upon her own initiative would hasten to assist the Soviet Union, for instance in case, in Estonia's opinion, the Soviet Union is threatened by a Balkan state. This assistance might come at a very undesirable moment and in a very undesirable manner. The same might happen the other way around: the Soviet Union might find Estonia to be endangered in a case where Estonia herself does not find it so, but considers it even harmful to herself.

W. Molotov replies: Assistance would be extended upon request of the other party. From the text of the draft it is clear that assistance would be an obligation, not a right. The Government of the Soviet Union thinks that in this respect there will not be any misunderstanding. Of course — both sides want to protect themselves against an aggressor and use help.

K. Selter thinks that this question is not sufficiently clearly solved in the draft. At the same time he asks: does not the "economic and diplomatic assistance" promised in Section 2 to Estonia sound inappropriate? Recently it has been agreed upon the interchange of goods and that agreement does not contain any assistance, but the economic relations are based on the equilibrium of the balance of payments. Diplomatic assistance under usual circumstances is not necessary; in case of "attack" such assistance is obligatory under Section 1.

A. Rei: Certainly it would not be advisable to include in the draft a clause which in its extent and meaning is not clear and which might create only misunderstandings and arguments. From this standpoint the second part of Section 2 seems unsuitable.

W. Molotov and *Mikojan* reply: this part of Section 2 which speaks of economic and other assistance could be omitted, if the Estonian Government finds it superfluous.

K. Selter asks: Why doesn't the draft state more specifically in what Estonian harbors it is contemplated to create Soviet naval bases? In this form the draft is ambiguous as to which harbor might become a base and which might remain free.

W. Molotov replies: Naval bases might be established on the islands, Tallinn, Piirnu and perhaps also in other places.

K. Selter argues: Under no condition could Tallinn be considered for a naval base, because Tallinn is the capital of Estonia. Parnu is unsuitable for the reason that it is frozen for four winter months.

A. Rei: Besides, Tallinn is a commercial port where it would be very troublesome, if not entirely impossible, to locate a naval base. Existing side by side, neither the naval base nor the commercial port could properly work or develop..

W. Molotov asks: What are your other ports? Perhaps it is possible to manage also without Tallinn and Parnu.

K. Selter replies: According to my personal opinion there are good harbor places on Saaremaa.

W. Molotov: That will not suffice. One point would be not enough.

K. Selter: I cannot say, but perhaps a suitable harbor place could be found on Hiiumaa.

W. Molotov: Saaremaa and Hiiumaa are of interest to the Soviet Union mainly as air bases. It is imperative to have a naval base also on the mainland. What harbor do you still have on the mainland?

Mikojan: The land areas for the air bases could be separated on a rental or concession basis. The land itself would remain a part of Estonian territory.

K. Selter: As Tallinn and Parnu cannot come under consideration, there is also the Estonian port of Paldiski.

A. Rei points out the location of Paldiski on the map and describes its condition.

W. Molotov: Perhaps then Paldiski will be suitable. However, one point would not be enough. Tallinn is not absolutely necessary. Which other point on the islands might come under consideration?

K. Selter answers that a suitable place on Saaremaa would be Tagalahe. At the same time he asks what is the reason for the 10-year period of the treaty.

W. Molotov replies: The duration of the treaty has been brought into accord with the period of the Soviet-German non-aggression treaty.

Proceeding to the additional protocol, Molotov, upon his own initiative, explains: With this additional protocol we want to confirm that the Government of the Soviet Union has no desire to force communism or the Soviet regime upon Estonia, nor in general to infringe in the slightest degree the sovereignty of Estonia and the independence of Estonia. The entire social system and public regime with its own government and parliament, foreign representations etc. remains unalterably in force as an internal matter of the Estonian state.

K. Selter, taking notice of these proposals and explanations of the Soviet Government: I take it upon myself to inform the President and Government and Parliament of the Republic of Estonia about them.

W. Molotov doubts: this means you wish to delay.

K. Selter: This does not mean a delay but a necessary allowance of time for consideration of the question.

W. Molotov: When can you be expected back?

K. Selter: About Thursday, today is Sunday.

W. Molotov: The matter is extremely urgent and of an undelayable nature, so that every day and hour is precious. It would be best if we could continue right away.

K. Selter explains once more that he, as a minister of parliamentary government, has no possibility to start deliberation of the question before informing the organs of parliament and for that purpose his presence in Tallinn is unavoidable.

W. Molotov agrees to that.

Upon *K. Selter's* question *W. Molotov* answers that he can arrange a reservation for Mr. Selter, Mrs. Selter, and Minister Selter's three companions on tomorrow's flight, which leaves Moscow at 8 A. M.

K. Selter: As I came to Moscow for the purpose of signing a commercial treaty, this agreement deserves also certain mentioning.

Mikojan: The agreement was ready for signature, but then political developments which needed prior clarification interfered.

W. Molotov to Selter: When you return to Moscow then we shall sign the commercial treaty.

The meeting ended at 1:10.

(Signature)
K. Selter

MINUTES OF NEGOTIATIONS AT THE KREMLIN ON SEPTEMBER 27, 1939.

On September 27, at 6 P. M. Foreign Minister K. Selter arrived back in Moscow for the purpose of continuing the negotiations with the Government of the Soviet Union on behalf of the President and the Government. Together with the Foreign Minister arrived Minister A. Rei, and delegated by the Government to participate in the talks were Chairman of the Chamber of Deputies J. Uluots, and Member of the Chamber of Deputies A. Piip. Upon arrival at the Legation, on instruction by the Foreign Minister, the Kremlin was notified that, as the Estonian representatives were tired from the trip, if possible they would not wish the negotiations to begin before tomorrow. But sometime thereafter there came a telephone call from the Kremlin, informing that Chairman Molotov requested urgently the Estonian Foreign Minister to come to the Kremlin the same evening at 9 o'clock in order to continue the negotiations. The Soviet Government could not find it possible to delay the talks by postponing them until tomorrow. The Foreign Minister, after consultation with his colleagues, accepted the invitation.

On September 27th at 9 P. M. K. Selter, A. Rei, J. Uluots and A. Piip appeared at the Kremlin where they were awaited on the part of the Soviet Union by W. Molotov and Mikojan. K. Selter in introducing J. Uluots and A. Piip announced that the Estonian Government had decided to ask these leading members of the Parliament to participate in the negotiations. There were no objections on the part of Molotov. The negotiations began and developed as follows:

W. Molotov: What answer do you bring?

K. Selter: The Estonian Government and parliamentary organs, having weighed with very great care the demand of the Soviet Government and the draft of a treaty of mutual assistance presented by you to me on inst., have authorized me to state that: the Estonian Government does not object in principle to the wish of the Soviet Government, the Estonian Government agrees to continue the negotiations on the basis of the draft-proposal presented to it, but announces that it wants to make a number of amendments in that draft. We reserve the right to make these amendments in writing. For drawing them up we need time until tomorrow. At the same time the Estonian Government expresses the opinion that in the interests of progress of the negotiations it would be desirable if they could take place in a more peaceful atmosphere. This atmosphere is being alarmed by the violation of Estonian territorial rights on the part of Soviet naval vessels and warplanes, against which I have already protested to the Soviet Minister in Tallinn.

W. Molotov: As to the violation of the territorial rights of Estonia mentioned by you, I am not able to say anything at present. We shall clarify and give a reply later. The agreement of the Estonian Government to continue the negotiations delights the Soviet Government. Unfortunately, we have bad news. A short time ago the Soviet Government received a report, which will also appear in tomorrow's press, that in the region of the Gulf of Narva the Soviet steamer "Metalist" has been torpedoed and sunk by an unidentified submarine. Many seamen of the "Meta-list's" crew have drowned. Molotov read the respective telegram from Tass (see annex) and stated that, as was known, the periscopes of two unidentified submarines had been seen in the same region the day before. These facts have so fundamentally changed the general picture that the Soviet Government cannot limit itself any more to the proposals which I have presented to you the last time, but has instructed me to present to you a supplement to these proposals, and namely: Estonia should give to the Soviet Union the right to keep in different places in Estonia for the duration of the present European war up to 35,000 men of infantry, cavalry and air force, in order to prevent Estonia and the Soviet Union from being drawn into war, and also to protect the internal order of Estonia (see annex).

K. Selter: As this proposal is new and presented for the first time, then, of course, the Estonian Government has not been able to take its position in respect to such wishes, but without needing to consult about it with my Government I can reply to you that this proposal is unacceptable to Estonia. In form and in contents the measures indicated in this proposal would mean a military occupation of Estonia by the Soviet Union to which neither the Estonian Government nor the people under no circumstances could agree. I find that our negotiations are becoming very difficult, if we do not confine ourselves to the limits which either side itself had so far drawn for its positions.

W. Molotov: If the last time we would have continued immediately the negotiations, we would have reached an agreement on the former basis. But you procrastinate. In the meantime events take place, as you see, and new developments raise

also new problems. The new developments show that the security of the Soviet Union requires more than has been talked about last time.

K. Selter: The reproach as if the Estonian Government would have procrastinated is groundless. I was here on the 24th of this month. I traveled to Tallinn to inform my President, Government and Parliament. I am back already today, that is the 27th. To give an answer more promptly than that in such an important matter is absolutely impossible, especially considering that Estonia is a parliamentary state. Therefore, any events which have occurred in the meantime, not caused by us, cannot give the Soviet Union the least right to present new demands.

J. Uluots: I, as Chairman of the Estonian Chamber of Deputies, can emphasize that the period during which the Estonian Parliament convened in order to receive the information from the Estonian Government and took a stand in regard to the Soviet proposals submitted by the Government, was exceptionally short and can be explained only that the Parliament was aware of the great seriousness of the question and also of the necessity to solve the problem speedily. Therefore it would be wrong to present new demands on the ground of allegations as if the Estonian Government was guilty of a delay and that in the meantime new circumstances have arisen. I support the positions taken by Minister Selter and express also the fear that in case the new proposal made today by the Soviet Government should stand, it would be difficult to find any basis for the negotiations.

W. Molotov: The Government of the Soviet Union insists upon this proposal. If you wish, Stalin can tell you that and explain the proposal. Do you wish to talk to him?

K. Selter: We wish.

W. Molotov into the telephone: Comrade Stalin, come here. Mr. Selter and other Estonian gentlemen are with me. He and his associates argue against our new proposal. They call it "occupation" and other dreadful names. Come and help to persuade them about the necessity of our proposal.

Stalin appears at the meeting in about 3 minutes. Molotov presents to him Selter, Uluots, Piip and Rei. The meeting continues.

K. Selter: The proposal which Mr. Molotov has presented to us today is without foundation and unacceptable to Estonia. As far as the motives of the proposal are concerned, I have already pointed out that the Soviet Government presented to us the last time a written proposal which was supposed to solve the requirements and wishes mentioned by Mr. Molotov. The Estonian Government and Parliament have, within the shortest time, discussed these proposals so that already on the third day I can be back here and announce our readiness to continue the negotiations. In the meantime nothing has happened which would have depended on the Estonian Government and would have changed the situation. The motive — torpedoing of the "Metalist" — raised by Mr. Molotov is not very convincing. We do not know the details about this event. We hear only from the news read by Mr. Molotov that the event is supposed to have taken place "near the Gulf of Narva", consequently outside the territorial waters of Estonia. What and whose submarine torpedoed it is not known. Where did this submarine come from and was it the same that fled from Tallinn? I think it was not. From the Tass report it seems that on the previous day the periscopes of two submarines are supposed to have been seen in that vicinity. Consequently, at least one of the submarines found in the Gulf of Finland had not escaped from Tallinn: perhaps this one fired the torpedo. In addition, as to the submarine that has escaped from Tallinn, it has been established in the meantime that it is near Gotland where it has landed two Estonian sailors who had been forcibly taken along. In view of all this, Mr. Molotov's new proposal has no foundation whatsoever. This proposal, as I have already stated, would in substance and form mean a military occupation of Estonia, to which the Estonian Government cannot agree under any circumstances.

W. Molotov: The events of the last days show that the Soviet Union lacks any security. It must be assumed that in the Gulf of Finland there is somewhere a place where foreign submarines can be based and supplied with fuel. At sea, at Leningrad's doorstep, Soviet ships are being torpedoed and sunk. Soviet seamen are drowning. Possibly the attack did not come from the vessel that had escaped from Tallinn, possibly there are in the Baltic Sea some submarines of third countries, for instance Britain, but the fact is this that the Soviet Union lacks security at sea and the Estonian Government is not able alone to guarantee that security. If Soviet forces would be stationed in Estonia, then it would be sure that nobody would risk to undertake such attacks.

K. Selter: Assuming that the facts given by you are correct, nevertheless there is no proof nor can it be proved that Estonia is guilty in the events of the last days. Without such a guilt no punishment can be imposed upon Estonia.

A. Mikojan: The Soviet proposal is not a punishment.

K. Selter: Your new proposal would mean a military occupation, for in accordance with it a foreign army of 35,000 men would be brought on Estonian territory, this foreign army would be stationed "in different places" and would protect the internal order of Estonia, that is, it would intervene in the internal affairs of Estonia. In conjunction with that, all assurances about the preservation of Estonian sovereignty and the form of government and economic system would be only a dead letter. The military occupation of an independent country, based on such motives, cannot be regarded as anything else but a punishment, in the present case a baseless and unjust punishment. Mr. Molotov stated that foreign submarines are being

refueled in the Gulf of Finland. This is a presumption; besides it is not verified. Modern submarines are capable of taking on oil for a six weeks' requirement. Only four weeks have passed since the beginning of the war.

J. Uluots: Indeed, from the legal point of view, Mr. Molotov's proposal would mean a military occupation which the Estonian Government could not accept. The Estonian Government could inform the Parliament of the previous proposal and I can emphasize once more that the Parliament has announced its position in this matter extremely fast. The Soviet Government must take into consideration that Estonia is a parliamentary state where the Government cannot make decisions in such matters without Parliament. The Estonian Parliament has found that we can enter negotiations on the basis of the proposals which have been made by the Soviet Government three days ago. The new proposal changes the picture so much that we would have no legal basis for the continuation of the negotiations.

J. Stalin: Our new proposal is not intended as a punishment. It is a preventive measure. We do not know who helped the Polish submarine to escape from Tallinn. We, of course, are not guilty of that. We believe also that the Estonian Government is not guilty of that. But evidently some international forces are nestling in Estonia who are engaged in such matters. They also have an influence upon the masses of the people. If you conclude with us a treaty, then this will not be enough for some. Others again will say you have sold down your country. There can come troubles and diversions. Those must be prevented. For that purpose it is necessary to place a strong Red Army unit in Estonia. Then nobody will dare to undertake something like that.

K. Setter: If you, Mr. Stalin, are saying frankly that you do not believe that the Estonian Government is guilty in the escape of the Polish submarine, then these are great words which we accept with great pleasure. But I cannot concur with the supposition that some international forces could have such an influence in Estonia as you fear.

A. Piip: Undoubtedly, the Estonian people, being allayed, will accept the assistance pact with the Soviet Union, wherefore no diversions need to be feared.

J. Stalin: The people are good everywhere. But among the people there are bad personalities who are occupying themselves with goals and matters unfamiliar and harmful to the people. A few days ago there was an accident with a military train near Odessa. The people of the surroundings of Odessa are for the Soviet Union. Yet, you see, there was someone who arranged the train accident. Also in Estonia there are all kinds of people. Thousands of spies have been sent to the Soviet Union over Estonia whom we have caught and many of whom we have shot with our hearts bleeding.

K. Selter: We hope that the treaty will be such that it will not injure the feelings of the Estonian people and that the people will accept it calmly. In such a case no excesses need to be feared.

J. Stalin: The present situation in the Gulf of Finland has been forced upon the peoples of the Soviet Union who have endured it so far.

A. Piip: The Estonian-Soviet peace treaty, in the conclusion of which I have also participated, has been a treaty guaranteeing a "just" and lasting peace.

A. Rei: There has never been an opinion in Estonia that the peace had been forced upon the Soviet Union. Credibly, this peace conformed also to the vital necessities of the Soviet Union. If now the existing basis and order of the relations are to be changed in such a way to the detriment of Estonia, then the existing good relations would suffer, from which the Soviet Union could not get any benefit either. The friendly feelings of the Estonian people would diminish.

J. Stalin: The placing of Red Army units into Estonia according to the proposal presented today is absolutely necessary. Otherwise the Soviet naval and air bases could not feel themselves secure during the present time of war. This is only a wartime measure. At the end of the war we will bring back these troops which are mentioned in today's proposal by us.

K. Selter: We would understand if you would wish to place small base-garrisons on the naval bases, whose duty would be the protection of the bases from the sea. These garrisons should be in conformity with the extent of the defense requirements of the fortifications and other implements of the bases, as well as with the size of the population and army of Estonia. At present the locations of these bases have not yet even been chosen and in those locations there is nothing which needs protection, except the territory of Estonia itself, for which there is no need of such measures. The proposal made by you last time foresaw a military collaboration in case of attack, if the attack would take place against the territory of Estonia. If this treaty is concluded, then the necessity of protection of the Estonian territory from the standpoint of the Soviet Union would be sufficiently satisfied. No attack on these bases — when they are already established — should be feared from the inland. The Estonian Government with its forces would see to it with sufficient vigilance. For all these reasons, outside of the case of attack, there could be talk only about garrisons at the bases and about the fact that the size of the garrisons will be decided by agreement, and that the size of these garrisons will be fixed separately for the duration of the present European war. Only on this basis can we continue our talks.

J. Stalin: We agree to make changes in our proposals in accordance with the positions formulated by you.

W. Molotov makes a short resume of Selter's and Stalin's positions.

K. Setter: If we speak now about the size of the security forces of the naval bases during the present time of war, then 35,000 men are too many for this purpose. Such an army has no purpose and is burdening, and can bring only difficulties and misunderstandings. This number we cannot accept.

J. Stalin: To reduce still this number, I do not find possible. Estonia herself can have 150,000 men in the army. 35,000 Red Army men is the minimum.

K. Setter: Even in the War of Liberation Estonia did not have 150,000 men in her army, but much less. Now, when the army is not mobilized, there can be no talk about a 150,000 figure.

J. Stalin: But you have mobilized against us?

K. Setter: No. We have not considered our relations with the Soviet Union such that we should mobilize.

A. Rei confirms this on his part.

J. Stalin: How big is then your army now?

K. Setter: I do not have data about that, but anyway 35,000 foreign soldiers would be comparatively too many.

J. Stalin: All right, lets us reduce this number to 25,000 men.

K. Setter: Also this is too large.

J. Stalin: That is the minimum.

K. Setter: We reserve the right, after consultation with our Government, to return to your proposal of today as well as to the question of the size of the garrisons of the bases and to make counter-proposals. We propose to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting is adjourned until tomorrow.

When saying good-bye, someone reminds Stalin that some Soviet functionaries are familiar with Estonia. Stalin replies to that: "I had many friends in Estonia. Now they have disappeared somehow. What has happened to them, I do not know. Perhaps I shall succeed in seeing them soon".

The conversation took place in the private office of Molotov. When Selter with his party stepped from the office into the waiting room, Ribbentrop with his party were standing and waiting there. Selter shook hands with Ribbentrop, Gauss and others. Rei shook hands with Schulenburg.

MINUTES OF DISCUSSIONS AT THE ESTONIAN LEGATION IN MOSCOW ON SEPTEMBER 27-28, 1939.

Upon return to the Legation at 10 P. M. the Foreign Minister asked the members of the delegation to remain together and proposed not to take a rest, but to start to work. Although the next meeting was scheduled for the next day at 4 P. M., it was possible that the Kremlin would ask to hold the meeting earlier, as this was sometimes customary here. If we wanted to appear at the meeting with thoroughly elaborated propositions, then we had to start working at once, in order to be ready before morning. There were no objections to this suggestion.

At the deliberations among the delegates the following questions arose, and the following conclusions were reached. The deliberations as well as the conclusions and decisions proceeded in complete harmony and without dissenting opinions in any question.

First of all, considering that the Government of the Republic had given consent for negotiations and conclusion of the pact on the basis of the draft previously presented by the Government of the Soviet Union, the question arises now whether the new demand of the Soviet Government has not changed the situation so much that the negotiations should be broken off and the delegation returned home. The delegation finds that 1) From today's utterances of the Soviet representatives, Stalin, Molotov, and Mikojan, it is unmistakably clear that the Soviet Union proceeds decisively and pressingly towards the objectives which she hopes to attain through the pact, and that from the deliberations all members of the delegation have received the common impression that Estonia would have little hope either to end the negotiations entirely without pact, or to maintain the counter-proposals, minimized on Estonia's part — without having to fear the realization of Molotov's and Stalin's warnings, 2) Stalin and Molotov apparently had finally agreed with Foreign Minister Selter's contention that there could be talk only of Soviet garrisons on the areas of the bases, but not all over the country, as Stalin and Molotov had demanded in the beginning, and 3) Stalin and Molotov apparently had a-greed finally with Foreign Minister Selter's contention that the duty of such garrisons could under no circumstances be anything else but "the defense of the external security of the bases", — not "keeping of internal order of Estonia", and 4) the question of garrisons of the bases within the limits of points 1 and 2 would have arisen within the framework of the previous proposal of the Soviet Government — upon specification or implementation of the agreement. Namely, the first draft received from the Government of the Soviet Union

provided that "Estonia guarantees to the Soviet Union the right to have bases in Estonian ports". Naturally, a base would include not only arms and other material parts, but also soldiers; therefore, already on the basis of the first proposal received from Molotov, the question of the number of soldiers would have arisen. In view of these considerations Foreign Minister Selter together with the delegation did not find the situation changed to such an extent that he should, upon his own initiative, return or ask the Government for permission to return. However, considering the number of garrison troops which Stalin and Molotov demanded, as well as the other terms of the new proposal, this proposal even in the above mentioned lighter form signifies a noticeable worsening of the situation, wherefore its discussion should not be continued without very pressing need. As to the latter, no one but the Government could decide that. Therefore, upon Foreign Minister Selter's suggestion it was decided to inform the Government of the Republic of the new demands of the Soviet Union and to ask for instructions.

Upon K. Selter's suggestion the firm position was taken that if in the coming deliberations the Soviet Union should persist in the demand that their troops must be placed over the entire territory of Estonia and would have the duty to guard the internal order of Estonia, then upon unanimous decision the negotiations must be broken off, because, as Selter stated, he would not give his signature to such an occupation agreement.

K. Selter took a telephone connection with Tallinn. He was informed that the flights of Soviet aircraft over Estonia were increasing and becoming more frequent, and Estonia was restraining from shooting. He stated on his part that a new proposal is being discussed and that a coded telegram in this matter is following and that he asks for instructions from the Government. In order to save time, the delegation proceeded immediately with the technical work, that is — the drafting of our conditions for the event that the Government would not want to break off the negotiations, so that the interim period would not have been lost.

Preliminary part

Selter presented the preliminary part of the agreement which had been drafted in the Foreign Ministry. This was unanimously approved.

Art. 1

Discussing Art. 1, the delegation found first of all that the Cabinet and the Foreign and Defense Committees of Parliament have expressed readiness to conclude the assistance pact pursuant to the demand of the Soviet Union. Analyzing the question of mutual assistance expressed in this Article: its extent, its effect upon the status of Estonia, and also the possibilities for its non-acceptance, the delegation found that it was precisely the mutual assistance pact upon which Molotov had put emphasis in the first place. By concluding such a pact the question of bases would be simpler and in a state of development which in a certain way is understandable between allies. On the other hand — even if it would be possible to avoid the assistance pact, for which we do not see any prospects — and if to accept the bases, then it would be questionable whether these problems in essence, which sooner or later would be caused by the bases established without a mutual assistance pact, would not diminish the expected advantages of this modus. Having established military bases in Estonia, the Soviet Union would be interested in their protection. Then it could be contended that we ourselves would not be able to do what would be necessary against a powerful enemy who would want to invade Estonia and attack the Soviet bases. It would be questionable, although possible, whether in case of war between the Soviet Union and an attacking third state the neutrality of Estonia would protect Estonia, that is whether such a "neutrality with bases" would be respected. For these reasons the necessity would presumably arise for the Soviet Union, upon outbreak of war, to put her bases in a tactical and operative contact with her main forces. For this contact she would most likely need Estonian territory, in other words — she would demand from Estonia passage for her troops and would draw us into war anyway, in spite of the absence of a mutual assistance pact. This perspective would already in time of peace have a disparaging effect upon the relations of Estonia with the Soviet Union and other countries and upon the international status of Estonia. The Soviet Government expects definitely in the given manner to obtain the mutual assistance pact. Together with the pact also bases are demanded. To speak about bases without a pact is evidently not possible. All these factors have to be kept in mind when discussing the importance of this Article. The question follows — are we forced to agree in principle with the mutual assistance pact, although the detriments and dangers connected therewith are known. The delegation found *that in the given situation the necessity of acceptance in principle of the mutual assistance pact and also Article 1 is, because of the demand coming from the Soviet Union, inevitable.*

K. Selter observes with respect to Art. 1 that as a result of the negotiations so far we have achieved that the Soviet side would evidently be satisfied if the assistance obligation would be limited only to 1) an outside attack and threat of attack, 2) action, mentioned in the previous point, directly against Estonia or through Latvia, 3) said action against the Soviet Union either through Latvia or directly against her shores on the Baltic Sea (actually the Gulf of Finland) and 4) the case, if there is an attack upon the Soviet bases in Estonia. The naming of the bases separately is necessary for the purpose of marking the special international status of the bases, as they would be in one respect Estonian territory, but at the same time an attack upon them would be an attack directly upon the Soviet Union, who in such a case would have the right to demand assistance.

Upon a question from J. Uluots, K. Selter stated that the position of the Estonian Government is that assistance must not be automatic, but would take place only upon a respective request from the party having been attacked.

The delegation found unanimously that on these conditions Article 1 would be acceptable.

In conformity with the above K. Selter prepared the text of Art. 1. After going over the prepared draft once more, K. Selter directed A. Piip to put the text in final form.

K. Selter: There should be added to the text that the aggressor must be a great power. With this we would be guarded against a possible trouble between Finland and the Soviet Union. Also, an attack upon a Soviet vessel at sea by an unknown submarine should not drag us into war. Also, there should be no necessity for us to entangle ourselves in a war between Poland and the Soviet Union.

A. Rei, J. Uluots and A. Piip agree with this proposal. The text is supplemented accordingly.

Art. 2

K. Selter: There should be omitted from the proposal of the Soviet Government the sentence about economic and diplomatic assistance. The part which relates to the sale of Soviet war material to Estonia on favorable terms could, for tactical reasons, be left in, so as by eliminating this sentence not to create the doubt that Estonia in her purchases of armaments would not at all be interested in Soviet offers, but that she wanted to orientate herself in the purchase of armaments in some other direction as before.

J. Uluots, A. Piip and A. Rei concur with these opinions. A corresponding wording is given to Art. 2.

Art. 3.

K. Selter: The first proposal of the Soviet Union mentions "naval bases in Estonian harbors" and "air bases on the islands". We on our part must strive to have the naval bases only on the islands, as provided in the Soviet proposal on air bases. Besides, not every island can come under consideration, but only Saaremaa and Hiiumaa. The locations of the bases and airdromes must be established and their limits fixed by agreement.

J. Uluots, A. Piip and A. Rei concur with these opinions and a corresponding wording is given to the first paragraph of Art. 3.

J. Uluots: It would be advisable to note in this Article, and not elsewhere, that the land for the bases and airdromes is being let for use on lease basis.

K. Selter, A. Piip and A. Rei concur with that and A. Piip supplements correspondingly the draft of Art. 3.

K. Selter: The declarative clause about the Soviet Union's right to keep strictly limited garrisons on the territories of the bases and airdromes would fit best in this Article, provided the Government agrees with such a declaration. It should be added that the parties must agree as to the maximum number of garrisons. As Stalin and Molotov categorically insist upon the entry of large garrisons to the bases during the present war, then it would seem unavoidable to deal with the total number of garrisons, provided a directive is received from the Government to continue the negotiations. Therefore, the following questions arise:

1) Would it not be possible to limit ourselves in the present discussions only to the declarative clause mentioned above in the text of Art. 3, whereas an agreement as to the size of the garrisons would be reached later upon implementation of the treaty?

Upon mutual exchange of views it is unanimously found that this could hardly be realized, considering the categoricalness of the Soviet representatives. It is also found that to leave the number open could also be inopportune to Estonia, since by leaving the number open Stalin would no longer be limited to today's reduction (25,000 instead of the 35,000 previously demanded) and not even to the original 35,000, but could speak of a greater number. It is decided, in case the Government desires at all to reach an agreement in respect to the treaty, to come to an agreement also in the matter of the size of the garrisons.

2) Should the size of the garrisons be tied to the total number of troops of Estonia?

Upon an exchange of views it was found that this would not be desirable, because in proceeding to such a basis we would pass the control of the number of our troops into the hands of the Soviet Government. The determination of the Soviet garrisons by a certain fixed number has the advantage that the size of the Estonian army does not depend upon any suppositions nor is it subject to any reporting.

3) If the Soviet Government does not retreat from the demand — to place certain larger garrisons on the bases in Estonia for the time of the present European war, and if the Estonian Government consents to this — should there be in the present discussions any talk of how large the garrisons of the bases could be when the present European war is over?

Upon an exchange of views it was found that this is not opportune. Talk of that would create new arguments about questions which for Estonia might be solved easier and more advantageously in the future, as the present moment is not favorable for discussions.

K. Setter: In the Cabinet the thought was expressed that the treaty should state expressis verbis that the areas separated for the bases and airdromes remain parts of Estonian territory.

J. Uluots, A. Piip and A. Rei concur with that and a corresponding wording is drafted.

Art. 4.

K. Setter: The proposal of the Soviet Union about so-called "prohibited agreements and alliances" is not clear. Prohibited could be only the entry into coalitions and the conclusion of alliances against the other party to the treaty.

A. Rei, J. Uluots and A. Piip concur with that and a corresponding wording is drafted,

Art. 5.

K. Setter: The declaration concerning non-interference in the internal affairs of the parties to the treaty embodied in the draft of the additional protocol received from the Government of the Soviet Union should be transferred from the additional protocol to the text of the treaty. In this declaration the following changes should be made in any event:

1) There should not be stated that "the treaty does not impair the sovereign rights of the other party" but that "the implementation of the treaty must not affect the said rights". The text of the Soviet draft would be a legal definition of the treaty to be concluded which would not have any value by itself. We, however, require that the parties in implementing all their rights and obligations derived from the treaty would act so that the stated rights of the other party would not suffer. This would be a general rule of treaty implementation which would be useful in interpretation of the existing treaty provisions. In accordance with this provision, all said matters would be left to the independent decision of each partner.

2) It should be stated that the implementation of the treaty cannot affect in any way the sovereign rights of the party to the treaty. Of these rights some could be mentioned specifically, these would be the form of government and the economic system. These two would cover those parts of the sovereignty-right which would be of specially great interest.

A. Rei, J. Uluots and A. Piip concur with these positions. Upon exchange of views it is found that "social order" as one of the manifestations of "economic system" does not require separate mention. It was also observed that it would not be advisable to mention in the text any particular phases of the government, as such an enumeration could place doubt upon the phases not mentioned

Additional Protocol.

K. Setter: Art. 1 of the additional protocol could contain the agreement as to the size of the garrisons of the bases.

A. Rei, A. Piip and J. Uluots concur with this.

J. Uluots: A provision should be taken into the additional protocol that all disputes that might arise in the implementation of the treaty as well as the supervision of the execution of the treaty are to be handled by a mixed commission created on parity bases. The idea would be that this provision would not exclude from the jurisdiction of the Conciliation Commission, provided in the Estonian-Soviet non-aggression treaty, questions connected with the present treaty, but that the Conciliation Commission would remain the highest authority.

K. Selter, A. Rei and A. Piip agree with the proposal and a respective text is drawn up.

The composing of the draft of the treaty was concluded on September 28, 1939 at 4 o'clock at night. In the meantime the instruction from the Government arrived, ordering the negotiations to be continued, to do whatever possible to soften the new proposal (entry of troops) of the Soviet Government, but to conclude the agreement anyway.

MINUTES OF NEGOTIATIONS AT THE KREMLIN ON SEPTEMBER 28, 1939.

On September 28, 1939 at 10 o'clock the Kremlin notifies that the meeting will be at 1 P. M. instead of 4 o'clock the same day.

On September 28, 1939, at 1 P. M. at the Kremlin the fourth meeting took place, attended by the same participants of the previous meeting. The talks developed as follows.

K. Selter: We have prepared on our part a draft of the text of the treaty. I would present this text reserving the right to make necessary and appropriate amendments later. Also, until now we have not received instructions from the Estonian Government about your demands, wherefore we reserve for ourselves the right upon clarification of the Government's position to return to the fundamental questions and in case of necessity to consider this draft as dropped. This draft is as follows:

Introductory part (*K. Selter* read it). There was no argument.

Art. 1 (K. Selter read it). Stalin remarked: much clearer than the previous text, but the addition that the assistance obligation is not automatic but arises upon request of the other party does not fit here, should be deleted here.

K. Selter: This addition has been drafted on our part as a result of the previous talks. We consider it extremely important to state expressis verbis that the assistance obligation is not automatic, but that, for instance in case a European great power would attack the Soviet Union in the manner stated in Art. 1, Estonia could, in case of convenience, remain also neutral. I think that it is not impossible that in such a case Estonian neutrality could even be rather advantageous to the Soviet Union, reducing the strain of the conflict on the Baltic Sea, the Gulf of Finland and the route to Leningrad.

J. Stalin: Very correct. Estonian neutrality in such a case could prove to be useful to the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, it would be preferable to express this thought elsewhere in the pact. After J. Uluots, W. Molotov, A. Rei, A. Piip and Mikojan had expressed their views on this question, it was decided to strike out this addition from the text of Art. 1, but to include in the additional protocol a new Article (3) containing the same thought, but in a more elaborated form.

Art. 2. (*K. Selter* read it). There was no argument.

Art. 3. (*K. Selter* read it).

J. Stalin: This is not acceptable. We cannot agree to bases on Saaremaa and Hiiumaa alone. We need Tallinn.

K. Selter: Tallinn we cannot give. That is our capital. It would be impossible for the state to preserve its sovereign right, if its capital would be a base for foreign troops.

J. Stalin: It would not be so bad: we could separate a certain district in Tallinn.

K. Selter: The situation would become intolerable. It must be assumed that a base is a certain military entity which would not be in harmony with the state functions connected with our capital. The separation of a district would not give much, because the navy of the Soviet Union is too large to be squeezed into some kind of a district. In one way or another, staying always in Tallinn, it would alarmingly affect the necessary independent character of the latter as the capital of another country. We cannot agree with a base in Tallinn.

A. Rei, J. Uluots and A. Piip add on their part arguments against Tallinn as a foreign naval base. Thereby *A. Rei* and *J. Uluots* point out the unsuitability of Tallinn, being a large commercial port, for purposes of a naval base, whereas *A. Piip* indicates the troubles that could arise if Soviet sailors would move around in Tallinn.

J. Stalin: We cannot do without Tallinn. I do not deny that certain difficulties would arise, but those we will overcome. On Saaremaa and Hiiumaa there is nothing. There everything must be built. That takes a long time. A ready port on the mainland is needed. The only one you have is Tallinn.

K. Selter: We cannot give Tallinn to you as a base. When I was here the last time, Mr. Molotov also said that Tallinn is not absolutely necessary.

A. Rei: I remember distinctly that Mr. Molotov said that Tallinn is not necessary as a base.

W. Molotov: I said perhaps it will be possible to do without Tallinn, if we find another suitable port on the mainland. But already then I said quite firmly that without a harbor base on the north coast of the mainland of Estonia the security system of the Soviet Union would not be feasible in the present circumstances. At that time I was interested in Parnu and Paldiski.

J. Stalin: Our military men tell me that Paldiski is not constructed and scarcely suitable as a base now, but that Paldiski can become a base in the future.

J. Uluots and A. Piip describe the history of the founding and erection of Paldiski and its present condition.

J. Stalin: Paldiski is a music of the future. We need a seaport now.

K. Selter: What you could use Tallinn for could be had also, for instance, in Paldiski. Tallinn as a naval base does not offer anything special that would not exist in Paldiski. Under no circumstances can we give Tallinn as a base. That is our firm position.

J. Stalin: I agree with you. But on condition that until Paldiski will be made ready, we can enter also Tallinn to take on fuel, provisions and temporarily stand in the approaches to Tallinn and in the harbor, somewhere at a separated dock. You have in Tallinn the so-called new port. A place can be found there. This right can be limited to a short period, but without it we cannot do. That is our final position.

K. Selter: I shall try to clarify our position before the next meeting.

J. Stalin: We will add to the text of Art. 3 the sentence that the leasing of the areas for the bases will be on favorable terms.

K. Setter: That is superfluous.

J. Stalin: Art. 2 also contains the words "at favorable prices".

K. Setter: We can also strike out these words there.

J. Stalin: Art. 2 has already been accepted. Therefore it is necessary also here. If you do not want it that way then we can include the words "at an agreed price". Otherwise you will skin our backs with your rental.

K. Setter: I agree. The price has to be reasonable. I think, however, that because of the amount of the rental you would not abandon the building of the base.

K. Setter reads the following articles in respect to which there are no arguments or remarks, except that K. Selter states that although the pact would forbid to enter alliances aimed against the other party, this restriction would not apply to previous agreements, especially the Estonian-Latvian defense treaty, which, regardless of the pact to be concluded, will remain in force.

J. Stalin and *W. Molotov:* We are not against it. The present pact does not affect the Estonian-Latvian treaty of alliance. That treaty can remain in force. As the present text of the pact speaks about future treaties, there is no need to make reservations with a special clause in regard to the Estonian-Latvian treaty.

Art. 1 of the additional protocol causes the following argument.

K. Setter: My Government does not agree to the admission of 25,000 of your soldiers. It finds this number to be too large. I think that even for the present time of war 5,000 is enough.

J. Stalin: 25,000 is rather too little than too much. My military men reproached me for having reduced the number from 35,000 to 25,000, but I am not of the same opinion with them. 35,000 was taken from the air. But 25,000 corresponds to the minimum complement of certain military units and also to their duties at the bases. Military men have never enough of armed forces.

K. Setter: 25,000 is also too large. Our military forces will also be there to protect the bases, if that would be necessary at all. I think that would not be necessary. No one will touch those bases. You would not act wisely if you would bring in too many of your armed forces and thereby would diminish the interest of the Estonian people and army to defend their country: then you would not be able to achieve your purpose. Only a friendly and sympathetic participation of the Estonian army in the defense could guarantee success in the fulfilment of the defense aims.

J. Stalin: We respect very highly the sentiments of the Estonian army and the spirit of cooperation between the two armies, but about 25,000 is the minimum complement of an independent military unit. Besides, the proposal says: up to 25,000.

A. Mikojan: A division is 17-18,000 men. To that must be added some special offices and units which are necessary for the organization of an independent military concentration.

K. Setter: That means that a maximum of 15,000 men would be sufficient.

J. Stalin takes out his yesterday's text and says that this text should be suitable. In this text we can strike out the enumeration of the categories of military units and make those corrections which I had made here with pencil yesterday.

Note: The main idea of Stalin's text was the placement of Soviet forces over the entire Estonian territory, whereby these forces would protect also the internal order of Estonia, that is — would be an occupation army.

K. Setter: As basis we have now the new text prepared by us.

W. Molotov: Yes, your text is better and can remain as a basis.

J. Stalin: (after a short quiet pause) The forces must not be too small. You surround them and destroy them.

K. Setter: This is insulting. We are concluding a treaty of alliance, but you speak as if we were the worst enemies who all the time should fear an attack upon each other.

J. Stalin: I do not want to insult you. But every dislocation of the military forces has its sensible minimum which cannot be reduced. We do not want to cause you unnecessary difficulties. We are going to build ourselves the billets for which we have suitable simple projects. We are also going to build at our own expense connecting roads that are necessary. Do not be afraid: this number is not too large. Perhaps there will be even a little less than that. In principle this question is more important. If one foreign regiment is admitted on one's territory, then from the standpoint of the principle it is no longer important whether any more of them come.

K. Selter: Of course, violation of the principle is most important, but it cannot be denied that the question whether 1 or 10 regiments is also of importance. I cannot give another position. I want to talk once more with my Government. Imagine what difficulties will arise with the billeting and provisioning of that army. From it will grow mutual dissatisfaction and annoyances.

The meeting ends at 3 P. M. The next meeting is set for 9 P. M. Leaving the conference room in the anteroom we met German Foreign Minister Ribbentrop, who was there together with Gauss, Schulenburg and others. K. Selter greeted and shook hands with Ribbentrop and Gauss; A. Rei — with Schulenburg.

Having returned to the legation, the delegation continued its deliberations.

From the directive of the Government it was evident that the Government considers the conclusion of the agreement very necessary. The delegation did not know all the circumstances which had been taken into account by the Government in preparing its directive, but it had to be assumed that the foreign and state security, as well as the internal peace and order, and the necessities of preserving the life of the nation, which were known to the delegation before its departure, had in the meantime become even more pressing.

The delegation found that it would not have a basis for breaking off the negotiations, and that these must be brought to conclusion and agreement.

The delegation found that it would not have a basis for protracting the negotiations, because the circumstances could not improve in the meantime.

The delegation found that regardless of the friendly tone of the negotiations, the talks of the Soviet representatives had repeatedly shown, as before, the same urgency and warnings about the threatening dangers which would confront Estonia in case the pact would not be concluded.

The delegation found that the Soviet claims in the open questions were very difficult. The delegation, being conscious of its responsibility before history, the Estonian people and state, found that it cannot do otherwise than to continue the negotiations, to do whatever still possible to ease the terms and to conclude the agreement. The delegation found that thereby it would fulfill the Government's directive and also its duty before the Estonian people. In case the agreement would not be concluded, the Estonian people would be threatened not only by war and conquest, but by partial destruction.

The members of the delegation felt in their conscience that they cannot incur such a risk, although the will of the Estonian people for independence, for the attainment of which heavy blood sacrifices have been brought in the past, speaks against the pact being forced upon us by the Soviet Union. Preservation of the people in the present situation is the ultimate which the Government must keep as the goal. The future does not bring anything to a people that in the meantime has been destroyed or has been subdued for a considerable period of time.

Taking all this into consideration, the delegation decided unanimously to proceed to the examination of the unsettled questions.

The delegation decided unanimously:

- 1) To insist that Tallinn would not become a base. In order to save Tallinn, to permit the creation of a base at Paldiski. As Paldiski is not suitable for this purpose right away, then to agree that the Soviet navy could enter Tallinn to take on provisions and fuel and to stay there temporarily. This right should be limited to a short period.
- 2) To insist upon a reduction in the number of armed forces to be admitted; if that cannot be accomplished — then to agree to 25,000.
- 3) The thoughts concerning Tallinn mentioned in P. 1 and the stipulation as to the size of the garrisons mentioned in P. 2 to be taken into the additional protocol. The idea about applicability of the assistance obligation on a non-automatic basis and the right of one party to the treaty to remain neutral if the other party agrees to it should also be included in the additional protocol.

Corresponding texts are drawn up and controlled again.

On the same day at 9 P. M. negotiations started at the Kremlin with Soviet representatives.

The participants were the same, except Stalin, who was absent in the beginning.

K. Selter: We have made corrections in the text. We suggest to continue the negotiations by reading the text.

W. Molotov: We agree to this suggestion on procedure.

K. Selter reads the introduction.

W. Molotov: Agree.

K. Selter reads Art. 1.

W. Molotov: Why should the assistance obligation become effective only in case the attacker is a "great power"? This must be effective also in case of attack by any European country.

K. Selter: Today we agreed that it might be a great power.

W. Molotov: I did not notice that.

K. Selter: J. Stalin was also here.

W. Molotov: The attacker could also be a great power. Let us strike out the word "great".

At this point J. Stalin entered and joined the talks.

K. Selter: I cannot agree with that. Would the Soviet Union need our assistance in case she would be attacked, for example, by Sweden?

W. Molotov: No, but she could attack you.

K. Selter: We can handle Sweden alone. We do not need your help for that.

W. Molotov: Look how you are. Stalin — support me. What is your opinion?

J. Stalin: Let us leave in "great power".

K. Selter reads Art 2 and 3.

J. Stalin: Tallinn is missing in Art. 3. We can't do without it.

K. Selter: It is not possible to give Tallinn as a base.

J. Stalin: The least to which we can agree is a base at Paldiski, but we should have the right to use Tallinn temporarily for provisioning and stay.

The delegation held a consultation among itself, whereby it was unanimously decided to agree. Thereafter K. Selter announced that they are compelled to accept this proposal. The words "District of the City of Paldiski" are added to the text of Art. 3. The Soviet side agreed that the question of temporary use of Tallinn should be mentioned in the additional protocol.

Extended arguments were still caused by the paragraph on the date when the treaty should enter into force.

W. Molotov: The treaty has to become effective with the signing.

K. Selter: According to the Estonian Constitution this is not possible: the treaty cannot become effective before ratification.

W. Molotov: How was it possible for Ribbentrop? Is your constitution different from those of other countries?

K. Selter: I know it definitely that the Estonian Constitution does not permit me to accept your formula.

After a prolonged argument, during which K. Selter, W. Molotov, J. Stalin, J. Uluots, A. Rei, A. Piip and Mikojan speak repeatedly, the Soviet representatives yield.

J. Stalin: Well, the treaty becomes effective after 3 days.

K. Selter: After 10 days. 3 days is too short a time.

J. Stalin: After 4 days.

K. Selter: Under seven days it is not possible.

J. Stalin: All right, after 5 days.

K. Selter: Today is Thursday. Tomorrow I return home, Saturday I give my report on the treaty. Then comes Sunday. Sunday I want to spend with my wife and son. They are coming to meet me. I think my colleagues want that too. Then

there would remain only 2 days for calling a meeting of the parliamentary organs and for ratification of the treaty. That is not enough.

J. Stalin: How old is your son?

K. Setter: Not yet 4 years.

J. Stalin: For your wife and son we will add one more day. Let it be 6 days then.

The Estonian delegation agrees.

Other parts of the text of the agreement did not cause any arguments.

Art. 1 of the additional protocol created a new argument about the number of troops to be admitted.

K. Setter: We insist on a maximum of 10,000 men.

J. Stalin and W. Molotov: We regard the maximum of 25,000 as absolutely necessary for safeguarding the security of the Soviet Union. We have decided to safeguard the security of the Soviet Union in one way or another. For this reason the measures provided in this pact are absolutely necessary. To these measures belong also the garrisons with a total number of 25,000 men. Do not force us to look for other possibilities for the security of the Soviet Union. Do not be afraid of these garrisons. We have assured you that the Soviet Union does not want in any way to affect Estonian sovereignty, government or economic system, nor the internal life or foreign policy. We do not want to act the way Germany has in Czechoslovakia. Consequently, the Soviet troops will refrain from everything that is not in harmony with these promises. You keep your army of the size you desire. Besides, the measures provided in this article are temporary, that is they will last as long as the present European war lasts.

The delegation held a consultation on the spot and decided unanimously to agree to the number of 25,000 (as a maximum).

K. Setter: Although we remain of the opinion that this number is too large and purposeless, we are ready to accept this proposal.

Art. 2 of the additional protocol caused the following argument.

J. Stalin: The text prepared here contains the thought that our ships can come to Tallinn "for a temporary stay". As in the beginning of the article, it is stated "temporarily, until completion of Paldiski". .. then it is not necessary to state below "for a temporary stay". Furthermore, the meaning of this would be ambiguous.

After *K. Selter*, *J. Stalin* and *W. Molotov* had argued about this question for some time, the delegation held a consultation among itself and decided to agree to the elimination of the word "temporary".

K. Selter: we agree to strike out the word "temporary". The time during which your navy could enter Tallinn under this Article should be limited to one year.

J. Stalin: 1 year is not enough. 3 years.

As a result of arguments it is agreed that this period should be "not over 2 years".

The other parts of the additional protocol did not cause any arguments.

Upon conclusion of the negotiations Molotov gave the texts of the agreement and additional protocol to be typed.

J. Stalin turned now to Foreign Minister *K. Setter* and continued: the agreement has been achieved. I can tell you that the Estonian Government did wisely and well in the interests of the Estonian people by concluding the agreement with the Soviet Union. It could have happened to you what happened to Poland. Poland was a great country. Where is Poland now? Where is Mosicki, Rydz-Smigly and Beck? I tell you frankly that you acted well and in the interests of your people.

K. Setter: This is also the opinion of my Government and myself as well as of my colleagues. I have still another matter. In the last days your airplanes violate repeatedly Estonian borders and fly over Estonian territory. So far we have not shot at them. But I lodged a protest with your minister and Mr. Molotov. These flights are inappropriate especially now during the time of negotiations. We know that you have more airplanes than those that have flown over Estonia. We know that the Soviet Union is strong. For what purpose are you demonstrating your power?

J. Stalin: These were young inexperienced fliers. They make errors. They are not attentive. But we can eliminate that. That will not happen again.

After that J. Stalin and W. Molotov invited all those present to a side table to eat.

During the supper, upon J. Stalin's and W. Molotov's proposal, toasts were drunk to President K. Pats, Foreign Minister K. Selter and General J. Laidoner. Upon K. Selter's proposal toasts were drunk to J. Stalin, W. Molotov and Mikojan.

The agreement was signed at 12 midnight.

This meeting lasted until 1 o'clock at night.

(Signature)
K. Selter