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SPEECH DELIVERED ON THE OCCASION OF THE SIGNING OF
THE PROTOCOLS FOR THE PROLONGATION OF THE PACTS
OF NON-AGGRESSION BETWEEN THE U.S.S.R. AND THE
BALTIC COUNTRIES UNTIL THE END OF 1945

April 4th, 1934

*M*ESSIEURS LES AMBASSADEURS, — We have to-day made arrangements for the future of pacts which expire only eighteen months hence. A promissory note redeemed before due date testifies both to the goodwill and to the sound financial position of the drawer. In the present case, the premature concern of our Governments regarding the term of pacts which still have a prolonged period of existence testifies to their goodwill and abundant reserve of peaceful intentions. This is also testified to by the rapidity, unexampled in the history of diplomacy, with which the initiative of the Soviet Government has been transformed into practical action. It was only on March 20th that the proposal was made to your Governments that the term of the pacts should be extended; a few days later your Governments gave their reply, a frank, unreserved and favourable reply. And to-day, only two weeks later, the matter has been given practical formulation. This circumstance testifies also to the tremendous growth of confidence and mutual understanding between our States.

Allow me to take advantage of this occasion to express my gratitude to your Governments for their very responsive attitude to our proposal; and indeed it could not be otherwise. Answers to proposals which are designed to consolidate peace achieve their full value and demonstrative force

only when made rapidly, without excessive reflection, without mental reservations and unconditionally. Sincere supporters of peace cannot reflect too long on such proposals. The consolidation of peace is such an undoubted boon that in comparison with it any conditions on which the reply to peaceful proposals may be made contingent are of insignificant importance.

The existing pacts between our States have now been prolonged for more than ten years—a term which has been unsurpassed in any obligations of a like character. We first had the idea of proposing the prolongation of the pacts for an indefinite period. But an indefinite period is an abstraction, a philosophical concept, and we feared that such a proposal might appear to be of a declarative character, whereas we had definite action in mind. At any rate, it should be clear to the whole world that our proposal is not of a temporary nature and is not inspired by a casual conjunction of circumstances, but is an expression of our constant and permanent policy of peace, an essential element of which is the preservation of the independence of the young States you represent.

The act that you and I have just jointly performed is coincident with the state of affairs in which the international situation is daily growing more acute. The threat of war that menaces all the five continents of the world is spoken about and written about daily, but we scarcely hear anything of the possibility and the means of averting this impending catastrophe. Governments and statesmen regard it with a sort of fatalism, as something that is absolutely inevitable. The only thing they can think about is a general rearmament, the race for armaments which in the past, far from averting wars, has only served as a stimulus for them. May the modest document signed by us to-day be a reminder to the world that there are States who perceive their international duty to lie in the consolidation of peace, or

its consolidation, at least, on that sector where its consolidation is to some extent dependent upon them.

I say to some extent, because there are States which are not signatories to to-day's protocol and whose policy may also influence the preservation of peace on the sector in question. The policy of the Soviet State will continue to be directed towards enlisting these States in the cause of the preservation of peace.

The political alarm and the threats of war in Europe to-day are caused by disputes between neighbouring States arising out of the transfer of provinces and sections of territory from one State to another owing to the formation of new political entities on these territories, or they are caused by dissatisfaction with the treaties implementing these territorial transfers. The Soviet State is a stranger to such disputes; it has never demanded the revision of existing treaties, and never intends to demand it. The Soviet State, which is a stranger to chauvinism, nationalism, or racial and national prejudice, perceives its State duties to lie not in conquest, not in expansion, not in expansion of territory; it considers that the honour of the nation demands that it should be educated not in the spirit of militarism and a thirst for blood, but in the fulfilment of the ideal for which the Soviet State was brought into existence and in which it perceives the whole meaning of its existence, namely, the building of a Socialist society. It intends, if not interfered with, to devote the whole forces of the State to this labour, and this constitutes the inexhaustible source of its policy of peace. In the roll-call of States which are interested in the preservation and consolidation of peace, its reply is always "Present!" The readiness with which the States you represent replied to our proposal, realised in to-day's protocol, gives us the assurance that in similar international roll-calls, they will, in unison with the Soviet Government, be always prepared to answer, "Present!"