

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

MOSCOW, November 9, 1940

—2 p.m.

[Received 4:43 p.m.]

1506. The Swedish Minister told me yesterday that recently the German Ambassador here has expressed to him concern regarding what he termed the somewhat defiant attitude which the Finnish Government is now adopting towards the Soviet Union apparently in the belief that Finland was assured of German support in the event of a Soviet attack. The Ambassador, according to Assarsson, said that it might become necessary for Germany to warn the Finns against provoking the Russians since Germany at the present time had no intention of impairing its relations with the Soviet Union for the sake of Finland and would not offer any military assistance to Finland in the event of a Soviet attack. The German Ambassador then made the general statement that as long as the present war continued Germany could not afford to risk the possibility of a conflict with the Soviet Union.

As I have previously indicated, the maintenance and development of friendly relations with the Soviet Union has been the consistent policy of the German Ambassador and, as reported in my 1359, October 17, noon, despite certain undercurrents of opposition to this policy during his recent visit to Berlin he was successful in obtaining the support of his Government for its continuance.

STEINHARDT

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*Source:* Foreign relations of the United States. Diplomatic papers. 1940. Volume I. General. (ACTIVITIES OF THE SOVIET UNION IN E A S T E R N EUROPE, AND SOVIET RELATIONS WITH THE BELLIGERENT POWERS). Department of State, Historical Division, Bureau of Public Affairs, 1959. (*University of Wisconsin Digital Collections*)