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Memorandum of Conversation between Hitler, Ribbentrop and

Molotov - November 12, 1940

2. The Fuehrer said difficult to forecast long range developments, but hope to avoid difficulties and to exclude conflict. This done more easily between Germany and Russia because each had a man of sufficient authority to determine the evolution of their countries in a given direction. It should be possible to reach agreement in the economic field which would secure friendly cooperation beyond the lifetime of their existing leaders.

3. Molotov agreed warmly with this talk. Hitler continued to say it was a difficult task the evolution of states over a long period. He believes it possible to agree on certain general points of view and to orient the political and economic interests of people to obtain a certain degree of security. Present situation showed Germany at war and Russia not at war. On the whole both Germany and Russia had gained advantages and political cooperation had been of use.

4. Molotov said this completely right.

5. Fuehrer said neither country had gotten a hundred percent, but in political life 20 or 25% was of great value. If they kept together, there would always be some advantage to both of them. If they came in conflict third parties would profit.

6. Molotov said that this train of thought confirmed by history.

7. Hitler said England no longer possesses a continental base. He described the measures taken against England and the importance of atmospheric conditions. English counter-measures ridiculous. When the weather improved Germany would strike the final blow. Now he had to consider the political questions which would follow this decision. This called for a new inquiry into Russo-German relations. He had reached the following conclusions:

1. Germany did not want military help from Russia.
2. Because of the extent of the war, Germany had to meet England in distant territories where she had no primary political or economic interest
3. There were certain demands which were necessary for Germany. Especially certain raw materials. It was necessary to meet the needs of Russia as in the case of Lithuania. Lithuania had considerable significance for Germany economically, but politically he felt it important to act as he did to maintain good relations between Russia and Germany. There were questions which had not been foreseen at the outbreak of the war. What were the main lines of Russo-German expansion? The German point of view is as follows: 1) the need of space. Germany would need 100 years to exploit the territories which had fallen into her hands 2) Germany needed certain raw materials 3) certain colonial expansion in central Afrika was necessary; 4) in certain areas, Germany Germany could not allow hostile air or naval bases (5,6,&7 are not included.

8. In no case were the interests of Russia affected. Molotov approved of this statement. Hitler said Germany and Russia could never become one world. Germany's interest in Asia only of a general economic and commercial kind. She knew that the possible colonial regions in Asia would fall to Japan.

In Europe there were numbers of points of contact between Germany, Russia and Italy, each with a desire for access to the open sea. Germany wanted to get out of the North Sea, Italy would break the barrier of Gibraltar; Russia wanted to reach the ocean. How could all this be done? He had told Laval and Petain that as long as the war with England lasted no step must be taken which hinder preparations for the ending of this war. Germany had no political interests in the Balkans. She was operating there to secure certain materials. Germany had wanted to end the war after the conclusion of the Polish campaign. England and France preferred to go on fighting. War was a bad business; the victor had to take on himself tasks which he would have accomplished more cheaply by peaceful methods. Molotov agreed with this and said that it was much more expensive to obtain one's objective by war than by peaceful means.

Hitler then said there was the problem of America. The US/ pursued an imperialistic policy. They were trying to get the British empire into their hands. This was for the year 1970 when freedom of other nations could be seriously threatened by this Anglo-Saxon power. In an exchange of views with France, Italy and Spain he had stated that these countries could cover the whole area of Europe and Asia with a kind of Monroe doctrine and a new common commercial policy where each of the powers concerned could claim those areas only which it could properly exploit. In other areas where Russia was a power with primary claim, Russian interest would have preference. Hence there would arise a great division of power. Hitler then spoke of German and Russian aims. It was possible for both partners to make considerable gains. He said Germany would resist any attempt of England to establish herself in Salonika. Molotov asked why Salonika was a danger. Hitler referred to the nearness of the Rumanian oilfields. Hitler then asked Molotov how Russia regarded the securing of her interests in the Black Sea and the Straits. Germany would be ready to help Russia in obtaining the Straits. He said however Germany had obtained a secure hinterland and important economic advantages in Poland. With the exchange of Lithuania for the Lublin area, the possibilities of friction between Russia and Germany were avoided.

Molotov said, the German-Russian agreement of the previous year was fulfilled with the exception of a single question which was Finland. That was unsolved. Was their agreement still in force so far as Finland was concerned. Then he spoke of the significance of the 3-power pact. ~~What~~ what was the meaning of the new order in Europe and Asia and in what respect would the USSR be a participant? Questions with regard to Russia's interests in the Balkans and the Black Sea would have to be cleared up. In relation to Rumania, Bulgaria and Turkey it would be easier for the Russian government to take a definite position if they were given explanation. They were interested in the New Order in Europe and particularly in the tempo and form of this new Order. They would also like to have some idea of the Asian order.

Hitler answered that the 3-power pact would arrange matters in Europe in relation to the natural interests of the European states and that Germany would consult the Soviet Union before a settlement was reached. This was also true for Asia where Russia would take part. Hitler thought it possible in conjunction with Russia to raise the question of the Black Sea, Balkans and Turkey. The matter was really one of securing the first crystallization for a comprehensive cooperation. The crux of the matter was to prevent all attempts of America to dominate Europe. The US had nothing to look for in Europe or Afrika or Asia. Molotov said that he was fully in agreement with Hitler's remarks about the roles of the US and England. He thought that Russia could take part in a 3-power pact on the condition that she came in as a partner.