

The speech of the Foreign Minister of Finland, Mr. Eljas Erkko, on November 30, 1939.

My dear American friends!

I am grateful for this opportunity of saying a few words to you in the US at this so graven serious moment. In spite of the fact that Finland so desired had been to live in peace in her own corners of Europe and good terms with her neighbors, the war is upon us. A great power with whom we have been negotiating regarding the maintenance of good neighborly relations, negotiations that are still open. has unilaterally denounced the non-aggression pact, which was to be in force upto the end of 1945 and has today attacked us bombing not only our defence positions and fortifications on the frontier but peaceful towns as well, destroying hospitals and spreading the terror of war over this country. Around me here in Helsinki I see houses falling together, houses burning in different parts of town, civilians killed in their homes, both grown and children and Helsinki is not the only place in Finland.

And we done nothing to give cause for such an attack. We have been accused of resorting to her style act and are constituting a threat to the security of this great power. I can assure you that Finland, as a small nation, never could have been and never can be a source of peril to any major power. The Soviet Union has so has repeatedly confirmed during the negotiations that no danger threatened her from Finland side. This not withstanding she has been declaring these last few days that our artillery has bombard her territory and that our soldiers had crossed the Soviet border and infringed her inviolability. On the basis of careful investigations, we have confirmed that no such acts have been committed by Finland. Certain acts that we have been accused are even a practical impossibility. It has also been argued that we have committed an unfriendly act in concentrating large bodies of troops on the Soviet frontier, which is described as a threat to Leningrad. As I already said, Finland is not in a position to threaten Leningrad, and has not the slightest desire to do so. I have informed the Soviet government of this, and also that Finland is willing to withdraw her troops in the Leningrad sector in order to dispel the last suspicion that we threaten the security of that city. We have proposed an investigation of disputes under the terms of our mutual agreement. We have also been prepared to submit the dispute to a joint committee of conciliation, and we are always prepared to submit to arbitration by a neutral power.

Once and for all, I wish to say with all solemnity that Finland has not wanted a war, has not desire to be a threat to anyone, and no desire either to become the instrument of a third power. All that Finland has desired by her policy is peace and the insurance that she can live her peaceful life within her own frontiers.

Finland is thoroughly democratic nation and has driving during her whole period of her independence to manage her affairs align democratic line. Fulfilling her obligations and trying to show the world that, in spite of her smallness, she is a factor of peace and culture in Europe. Despite of our efforts, we are the victims of an attack. All that is left for us is to defend our

liberty and our existence with all the means at our disposal. Nevertheless, we have not blindly resort to war but are and remain to the end ready for a peaceful solution of the conflict. I send to you, the great American people, the warm greetings of a little democratic Finland in her hour of adversity and anxiety and thank you for all you've done for us and also for the support you have given us in so many ways. Please, remember us in your prayers.

Source: The audio archives of YLE (Finnish Broadcasting Corporation, FBC). Recorded in English on November 30, 1939 by the Foreign Minister at the FBC studios with the purpose to make this available for the general public in the United States. Transcribed from the audio by Pauli Kruhse