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SOME CONSIDERATIONS ABOUT THE BRITISH POLITICS
DURING THE INTER-WAR PERIOD IN THE BALTIC AREA
(Summary)

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Even though there are certain comparisons to the minor role that the states from the Eastern and South-Eastern Europe had in the British politics – in the hierarchy of the strategic interests and of the diplomacy in the inter-war period –, the Scandinavian and the Baltic areas had a second role, but not meaningless, because it implied some particularities not at all to be ignored in the future evolution of the power balance in the region. Further more, as a great naval power, Great Britain had a certain influence and prestige in Northern Europe, a unique rank at the end of the First World War. We can thus appreciate that from this position Great Britain was the main architect of the political construction during the inter-war period in the North-Eastern Europe, and the British naval presence seemed to reaffirm Britain's stature as a leader in the Baltic area during the key-moments in the history of the Baltic states and Finland's fight for independence, but also the role played in establishing the frontiers between the Baltic states and Poland in 1919-1923.

Given the context, Great Britain, as a power with legitimate interests concerning peace and stability, wanted to create and preserve a power balance in the Baltic area, but also to avoid some political and military enjambments in the region, that they might not apply in the future. From this point of view, options were obvious. Great Britain tried to determine the deletion, as much as possible, of the conflict sources at the end of the war; further more, it also wanted to prevent one or more powers from imposing the hegemony over the region, by upholding the little and middle countries from the Baltic and Scandinavian areas to maintain peace and to face whether alone, whether together, the power tendencies of the influential states.

We must underline that in the inter-war period there was a certain dose of skepticism in Great Britain concerning the viability of the Baltic countries. This feeling was loaded not only by the difficulties of their union in a collective construction of security, but also from the German and Russian's constant essays of imposing their domination in the region. From this point of view, we can notice a certain difference of British attitude only in Finland's case, a state which had little importance in London's eyes, but whose military and strategic potentials were recognized in case of an eventual British-Russian conflict.

Later on, at the end of the '30s, the Finnish politicians at least, still perceived the British attitude as a key decision for any security enjambment in Northern Europe, even though the idea of collective security was almost completely discredited and compromised during the period.

Britain's attitude was totally changed once with the Soviet-German pact on the 23rd of August 1939 and with the break out of the war in Europe. The viability of the little states seemed thus compromised for ever in the new context; but Great Britain, which supported their independence and their sovereign rights until the end during the tripartite negotiations in spring and summer of 1939, was now on the point of sacrificing them in order to avoid the Soviets' hostility or to transform Moscow in an enemy.