

TIGHT BINDING
RELIURE TROP RIGIDE

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(iii) Petsamo Area

The original Soviet demands for possession of the Petsamo area were made in December 1941 and were renewed at the Teheran Conference, although it was stipulated that either Hango or Petsamo would be satisfactory. The United Kingdom did not oppose Soviet claims to the 1941 Russo-Finnish frontier, but the claim to Petsamo was considered as falling into a different category from other boundary questions. Nevertheless, the United Kingdom was prepared to examine the proposal if it should be put forward as part of the general peace settlement. This policy was reaffirmed in March 1944, and it was specified that there would be no objection to the Soviet Union acquiring Petsamo instead of, or even in addition to, Hango, provided the question of compensation for Canadian interests in the nickel mines were taken into consideration.

The Finns maintained that the Soviet Government had, in 1940, declared a northern sea exit essential to Finland, but M. Molotov reminded them that their subsequent actions and three years of war on the side of Germany had changed the situation. Consequently, although the original Soviet armistice terms, which were refused by Finland, left the question of Petsamo for subsequent settlement by negotiation, the final terms gave this area to the Soviet Union.

At the Council of Foreign Ministers London Mr. Byrnes declared that the United States would neither agree nor disagree with the point of view of the other two powers as regards Finland, and the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union accordingly decided that the territorial arrangements made under the terms of the armistice would remain unchanged in the final peace treaty.