

7. Nevertheless, Stalin did not immediately close the door to negotiations with the democracies; on April 17 Molotov proposed to the British and French ambassadors in Moscow the formation of a triple alliance against German aggression. The preparations, however, proceeded in leisurely fashion, and even at that late date the British Government appeared to have no realistic estimate of the danger, no accurate knowledge of the forces involved, and, above all, no conception of the absolute necessity for an immediate and binding agreement with the Soviet UNION. On April 8, 1939, Litvinov resigned as commissar of foreign affairs, and his portfolio was taken over by the premier (chairman of the Council of People's Commissars), Viacheslav Molotov.