

# Minor Country Relations

The great powers certainly play the predominant role in global affairs but minor countries can add significant influence or even tip the balance. Especially Italy and France recognized this fact and invested intensely in diplomacy.

## **Belgium:**

De Gaulle played all his cards to secure Belgium as a buffer zone. The rather late declaration of war by France upon Germany lulled Belgium into a false sense of security – or created a sick nervousness within the political class.

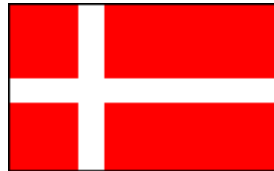
Classification: allied



## **Denmark:**

Despite extensive offers made by Sweden and the Scandinavian Union, the small state stuck to her independence after both Britain and Germany declared respect for her neutrality.

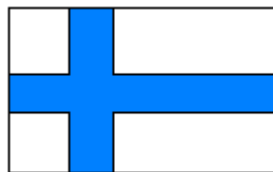
Classification: neutral



## **Finland:**

After the Russian attack, the hard-pressed country sought for major power support, but neither Britain nor Germany would risk a confrontation with Stalin. Fortunately, Sweden offered selfless assistance.

Classification: independent



## **Greece:**

Despite offers by both De Gaulle and Il Duce, Greece retained her neutrality. Later she would team up with Bulgaria and Hungary for a split of Yugoslavia but never did she support any major power alliance.

Classification: neutral



## **Hungary:**

After Italy assigned only a puny portion of Yugoslavia for her intervention, and no promise for the lost territories in Romania, Hungary sought assistance at the Reich. But Hitler shunned a conflict in the Balkans and feared that Romania would seek a deal with Russia.

Classification: independent pro-axis



## **Iraq:**

Italian arms smugglers and secret agents readily supported the Iraqi national uprising, promising further arms deliveries once the British had been driven out. Of course, this promise failed to materialize, and the uprising almost failed. The result was a parted nation, with the south remaining under British control, the north repairing from the damages of the fights.

Classification: independent pro-axis



## **Netherlands:**

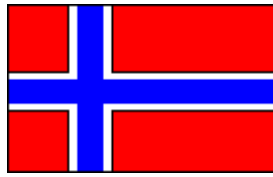
Hitler gave his best to keep the Netherlands out of the war, especially after Belgium had so frivolously discarded the German guarantee of neutrality. Ribbentrop expected French agitation, which proved to be right. De Gaulle made several attempts to entice Holland, with huge promises of German territories in case of an allied victory. Hitler promised a neutral the state of the Netherlands just the same as in WW I. Despite Japanese aggressions, the Dutch remained neutral towards Germany but prepared to resist the Japanese.

Classification: neutral pro-allied



**Norway**

British interest in Narvik did not become acute until the tireless efforts of Swedish and Finnish diplomats finally succumbed the concerns of the Norwegian government. Norway became a full member of the Union of Independent Scandinavian States. Germany had no objections, finding it comfortable to deal with a single state for the ore shipments instead of two separate countries.



Classification: independent

**Romania:**

How dearly would Romania have embraced French or allied help in her struggle against communist threats? But no, France was embroiled in his homelands and England could not provide any means of help. Germany was gladly seen as a trade partner, and peace with her was an alleviating fact to the government. But Romania was a gainer in World War I, and Germany had no reason to endorse the treaty of Trianon against Bulgarian and Hungarian demands. Italy was interested but likewise shunned the troubled that would ensue. Bessarabia was left to the Russians, and King Carol II hoped that despite the severe tensions in Europe, his ship would stay in clear waters.



Classification: neutral

**Siam:**

Under Japanese pressure the small Asian kingdom granted Japan naval bases and promised to attack Burma as soon as Japanese arms delivery would allow her army to undertake such risk. Japan guaranteed the independence of Siam and her 1939 borders.



Classification: axis

**Spain:**

Not without surprise, Franco turned out to be much more interested in a Spanish participation than Hitler. The latter feared the indefensibility of the large Spanish peninsula and hoped to keep Spain pro-axis but neutral. But Franco's ambition in southern France had to be quenched. Gibraltar was his second prime target, with plans to introduce a tax on all shipping across the straits. Mussolini, on the other hand, was more than happy to add Spain to his list of 'co-operating nations' for his dream of Imperium Romanum II.

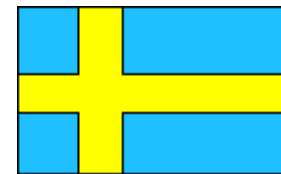


After the disastrous campaign in France, Franco swooningly tried to revert to neutrality. Keeping Gibraltar for Spain, it was clear that the Allies would not come to terms with Franco. His little trick of declaring neutrality was of course void by international law, and went off dumb.

Classification: axis

**Sweden:**

Per A. Hansson, the ambitious social democrat prime minister of Sweden, had the vision of a pan-Scandinavian union, a league of all Nordic people with a revived Swedish-dominated great power. The Soviet aggression against Finland was seen by him a the great chance to unite the dispersed interests of the lands around the Baltic Sea. Though only partially successful, he managed to bring Norway on his side, and Finland gladly accepted under these circumstances – they would as likely have signed a blank cheque. Union talks were already underway with Estonia and Latvia as those two were overrun by the Russian war machine. Nevertheless, the Scandinavian policy aims towards a reunification with the Baltic States, and irrevocably puts herself against the Soviet Empire.



Classification: independent

**Turkey:**

Prime minister  
Ismet İnönü  
soon realized



Turkey's strategic importance. His diplomacy with Britain and Italy was dominated by the thought 'who offers the highest price?'. But Britain was not willing to pay any price to an arrogant aspiring middle-east country that would, under better circumstances, beg for her mercy. Mussolini gladly accepted the chance to further extend his list of political achievements in his career. Turkey, on the other hand, remained cautious to all sides. Peering at Syria, İnönü carefully watched every reaction by Russia, knowing that a two-frontier war would spell doom for the fledgling Atatürk Republic.

Classification: neutral pro-axis

**Yugoslavia:**

Both England and  
France eagerly  
worked on  
overthrowing the



axis-friendly government of prince-regent Paul. British agents finally succeeded to supply the coupists with the necessary intelligence information and weapons to execute the upheaval. Hitler was unimpressed. With Gibraltar in the hands of Franco he saw no need for action. Mussolini, on the other hand, took the chance to consume the multi-national state. After French military advisors suggested a withdrawal of Yugoslavian troops to Split and then to Africa, to join the Free French, Simovic parted with the Gaullists and decided to defend Serbia at all costs. Despite lack of support by Britain, due to the loss of Gibraltar, Yugoslavia regards herself allied with Britain in the fight against Italy.

Classification: allied