

Stalin's foreign policy essay sample



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Joseph Stalin rose to power in the USSR by 1928. His foreign Policy means how the USSR interacted with other nations such as France and Germany. Historians interpret Stalin's foreign policy in two different ways: One side describes his foreign policy being aimed at manipulating the western nations (Great Britain, France, Germany and the US) into a destructive war between them, making it easier for Stalin to expand towards the west. This view describes Stalin as being very aggressive. However, the other view states that Stalin was looking for security of the USSR, and protecting his nation from a German invasion, seeing that Hitler has described Russian territory as "Lebensraum" in his manifesto "Mein Kampf". This second view makes a lot more sense as his main aim of security is attached to sub-aims which have been met by 1941.

Aims and sub-aims of Stalin's foreign policy:

Stalin's main aim he hoped to achieve with his foreign policy was security for the USSR. Security, in this case, means to protect the USSR from a German invasion. In order to achieve this aim, he had to achieve two sub-aims. One being political recognition by the powerful western nations and the other being industrial and military strength. To be recognised by the other nations would enable him to form trade alliances (which would help strengthen the USSR's economy) and peace treaties, which would prevent the USSR from being invaded. Military and industrial strength would make it harder for any other nation to invade, seeing that they would have to face much higher resistance and a better organized country with improved arms. Both sub aims are linked to the main aim, because the USSR will be harder to annex if the sub aims are met, therefore security for the USSR increases.

Successes and failures:

Successes| Failures|

In 1932, the USSR signs peace pacts with Finland, the three Baltic states, France, Italy and Poland. The fact that powers such as France and Italy are interested in signing a peace treaty with the USSR is clearly a success for Stalin. It confirms that these countries have recognized the USSR as both a nation and a possible threat. In 1934, the USSR joins the League of Nations. This is a success, because being let into the league of nations after being rejected from it in 1920 means that the other powers that are part of the league have recognized the USSR as a thriving nation in the east. In 1935, the USSR signs an assistance pact with Czechoslovakia and France, which means that France and the USSR will help in case of an invasion. This is a success, because it strengthens the Franco-Russian relationship. France was one of the main economic powers back then, so significant progress has been made for trade alliances or similar pacts in the future. In 1936, Stalin intervenes in the Spanish civil war. After having to suffer great losses and realizing that promoting left-side views in other nations might not be liked by the UK and France, he pulls his troops out of Spain and lets Franco's fascists win the war and take over the country.

Historians have been arguing whether or not these were his intentions, however, this matches with Stalin not supporting a World Wide Revolution but rather sticking to socialism in one country. Also one could argue whether this was indeed a success or rather a failure of Stalin's foreign policy. Seeing that the losses he suffered did not really affect Stalin not meeting his aim of military strength as much as successfully beating Franco's fascists in the civil

<https://assignbuster.com/stalins-foreign-policy-essay-sample/>

war and raising awareness of a world wide revolution in the UK and in France would have affected his overall goal of security and not being invaded. The UK in particular would not have welcomed this, seeing that the Zinoviev-Letter which was found by the UK suggested a Communist Revolution in Great Britain. The German foreign minister Ribentropp travels to Moscow in 1939 to sign the Nazi-Soviet Pact which says that Germany and the USSR will stay at peace with one another for the next ten years.

Also, in a secret part of the treaty, Poland is divided up between the two nations, and Germany lets the USSR have the Baltic states. This led Stalin to believe that his foreign Policy was successful, and that he had effectively managed to avoid the threat of a German invasion. The signing of this pact could be deemed a success to some extent, however seeing that Germany invaded the USSR only two years later could be argued to be a failure. One could say that the Nazis were to invade the USSR anyway, and thus the Molotov-Ribentropp pact actually allowed for more time to further armament and to develop the USSR's heavy industries. Ultimately this might have given the USSR the upper hand and the necessary strength to win the war against Germany, which makes the signing of the pact a success. In 1933, Hitler comes to Power in Germany and cancels the Rapallo Treaty. This is a failure, because the Rapallo Treaty was a treaty of friendship and economic assistance with the USSR. First signs of Hitler not sympathizing with the USSR are now seen. In 1938, the USSR was left out of the Munich Conference, where the Sudetenland (Czechoslovakia) was given to Germany (in violation of Versailles) by the UK and France.

This was a failure of Stalin's foreign policy, because it clearly shows that the USSR was disregarded and not recognized as a necessary member of the conference. One could argue that this isn't a failure because the USSR would have disagreed with Germany taking the Sudetenland due to the assistance pact with the Czechs, but then again, France signed the pact too, why would the USSR not let Germany take the Sudetenland, both countries were scared of a possible German invasion and didn't want to give the Nazis reason for one. After the conference took place Stalin realized that Germany was expanding eastwards and that he needed to find a deal with Germany.

After the Nazi-Soviet pact was signed, Stalin supported the Germans with resources. This is a failure, because the Germans eventually invaded the USSR and Stalin could have used the resources to strengthen his own industry and military. One could argue that this prevented the Germans from invading earlier, however one would be speculating about only a couple of weeks. Also, Stalin increased the amount of resources given to Germany after the annexation of France because he wanted to sympathize with Germany, and that hurt his own industry even more.

Overall Conclusion:

Stalin's foreign policy up until 1941 was successful to some extent, because he avoided a German invasion until he developed the USSR far enough to survive it (after having to suffer from heavy casualties). He also met his sub-aims of military and industrial strength and recognition by other countries. They were achieved by signing pacts with other nations, forming trade alliances and not promoting a world wide revolution. Historians have argued that Stalin's foreign policy was not successful because Germany invaded the

<https://assignbuster.com/stalins-foreign-policy-essay-sample/>

USSR, however, Hitler stated that he wished to annex parts of the USSR in his manifesto "Mein Kampf" earlier, so a German invasion was predestined to happen, regardless of what Stalin did.