Extract from the telegram of the Soviet Ambassador to the UK, F.T. Gusev, to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the USSR, 28 June 1945

[…]

It can be expected that in the forthcoming meeting of the three Heads of Government, the British will put forward for discussion in one way or another during the meeting the following issues:

1. The withdrawal of Soviet, US and UK troops from the territories of the Allied countries after the war in Europe. The British are interested in the Soviet army’s withdrawal as soon as possible from the territory of Poland, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. For this purpose, the British may take the initiative and propose an approximate period of withdrawal of its troops from the territories of the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Greece and Norway.

2. On the deadline for the armistice with Romania, Finland, Bulgaria, Hungary and Italy to come into effect, and to replace the treaties of peace with the terms of the armistice.

Due to the weakening of the military, political and economic influence of the USSR in countries such as Romania, Finland, Bulgaria and Hungary, the British are interested in the fact that the armistice terms replace the peace treaties, and thus deprive the Soviet Union of the benefits which it has accrued over the course of the war. Under the conditions of the truce with the above four countries, military occupation was not undertaken during the war against Germany and, consequently, at the conclusion of peace treaties there will be no pretext for having Soviet armies remain on the territory of these countries. The British dream is to recover their lost political and economic positions in Romania, Finland, Bulgaria and Hungary, particularly by economic methods after the signing of the peace agreement, when these countries will have experienced shortages in raw materials, goods and equipment for the recovery of their economy.

The experience of the Allied Control Commission’s work has convinced the British that they cannot restore their interests in these countries if they do not affect change in the existing status quo. The British press is already preparing public opinion in that regard, that, supposedly, allied forces will soon leave Italy[[1]](#footnote-1) and hand over full control of the Italian administration. All this is done with a specific purpose of impacting the Soviet Union’s positions in Germany's former satellites.

It is difficult for now to say what specific proposals can be made to the British, although suggestions can be made on this issue.

3. Territorial claims during the peace settlement in Europe.

a) [Territorial] Claims for Poland to [be linked to] Germany. The western and northern borders of Poland.

b) [Territorial] Claims for France to [be linked to] Germany.

c) [Territorial] Claims for Belgium and the Netherlands to [be linked to] Germany.

d) [Territorial] Claims for Czechoslovakia to [be linked to] Germany. The transfer of the German population from Czechoslovakia.

d) [Territorial] Claims for Yugoslavia to [to be linked to] Italy and Austria. [Territorial] Claims for France to [be linked to] Italy.

e) Transylvania. Teschen.

The British will seek to participate in the discussion of regional issues in Europe, even in those cases where it concerns them the least, and not directly with the big countries, such as the question of Teschen and Transylvania. In such cases, we will have to ask the British and the Americans as to what that they intend to do with the Italian colonies and Italian islands in the Mediterranean Sea, as well as the fate of the Dodecanese islands.

It can be expected that the most pressing issues are questions concerning Poland's western border, the Italian-Yugoslav and Yugoslav-Austrian borders.

4. Allied policy in Austria. The fact of the formation of the Austrian Government will be used as proof that the decision of the Crimea Conference on the joint policy of the three powers is not being implemented in Europe.

5. Turkey and the Straits.

In accordance with the decision of the Crimea Conference, it was assumed that the question of the straits would be discussed at the next meeting of the three ministers. It was assumed that the Soviet Union would put forward their proposals. Maybe at the next meeting we should make a proposal for a decision in principle of the matter.

It can be expected that the British come to Turkey’s defence regarding the question of bases in the Straits and of Kars and Ardahan[[2]](#footnote-2).

6. On the withdrawal of troops from Iran.

It can be expected that the British will make a new proposal on early withdrawal of Allied troops from Iran.

[...]

28.VI.45 Gusev

SUMMARY: 26.VI Comrade Vyshinsky asked to inform about views on issues that may be raised by the British when the three meet.

[FPARF, f.059, inv.15, fold.38, file 219, pp.25-27]

Keywords: inter-allied relations, post-war Eastern Europe, post-war Western Europe, Turkey, Italy, Yugoslavia

1. By the summer of 1945 a harsher assessment had also taken root among the British military leadership. While working on drafts of the peace treaty with Italy, the post-war planning staff proposed limiting the length of the Allied occupation in Italy until no later than 1950; Field Marshal Alexander was inclined to be more decisive: ‘we should not limit our right to station troops in Italy only up to 1950 but rather for as long as we consider necessary’ (C.O.S. (45) 534 (O), Memo by Alexander, 15/08/1945 // TNA, CAB 80/96). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. At the meeting with Sarper which took place on 7 June, Molotov articulated the new treaty terms the USSR were offering to Turkey: joint control of the Straits, provision of a military base for Soviet use in the region of the Bosphorus and Dardanelles, the return to the Soviet Union of Kars and Ardahan. Sarper declared that such demands were practically unacceptable to Turkey (see: Jamil Hasanli, Stalin and the Turkish Crisis of the Cold War, 1945-1953. Lexington Books: Lanham, 2011, p.77-78). According to a number of scholars, the territorial demands of the USSR were advanced, first and foremost, with the aim of applying pressure on the principal issue – a change in the arrangements at the Straits (see, for example: Roberts G. Moscow’s Cold War on the Periphery: Soviet Policy in Greece, Iran, and Turkey, 1943–8 // Journal of Contemporary History. 2011. Vol. 46. No. 1. P. 76). News of the Soviet terms inspired fresh anxieties in British diplomatic circles. On 25 June, Peterson wrote from Ankara that ‘if we fail to stop the USSR in Turkey we shall presumably meet her in Syria and beyond.’ Scholars note that, in their turn, ‘these views were widely shared within the Foreign Office’ (Sitki Bilgin M., Morewood S. Op. cit. P. 34). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)