Cabinet conclusions on the recognition of Bulgaria and Romania, and the Iran crisis, 28 January 1946

SECRET

C.M. (46) 9th Conclusions

28th January 1946

1. The Foreign Secretary recalled that it had been agreed at the Moscow Conference that the United Kingdom and the United States Governments would re-establish diplomatic relations with Romania on being satisfied, by the report of a Tripartite Commission, that steps had been taken to add to the existing Government representatives of two of the Liberal Parties[[1]](#footnote-1) in Romania. A Commission consisting of Sir. Archibald Clark Kerr, Mr. Harriman and M. Vyshinsky had visited Romania and made arrangements which, at the time, had seemed satisfactory[[2]](#footnote-2).After M. Vyshinsky and Mr. Harriman had left the country, however, there had been indications that M. Groza might not in fact carry out the agreed conditions; and the British representative in Bucharest[[3]](#footnote-3) had been asked for his views on this point.

Meanwhile M. Vyshinsky, who was now in London, had asked what our intentions were. He had said that he had no information suggesting that M. Groza was unwilling to give effect to the agreement reached with the Commission; and had given his assurance that the Soviet Government would do their best to see that the agreement was carried out.

The Foreign Secretary said that, in all the circumstances, he was not disposed to withhold recognition of the Romanian Government[[4]](#footnote-4). His intention was that recognition should be accorded simultaneously by this country and the United States; and, subject to the views of the Cabinet, he proposed to make arrangements to this end with the United States Government.

The Cabinet: -

(1) Endorsed the line of action proposed by the Foreign Secretary in regard to the recognition of the Romanian Government.

The Foreign Secretary recalled that it had also been agreed at the Moscow Conference that the Soviet Government should tender advice to the Bulgarian Government regarding the broadening of the basis of that Government. M. Vyshinsky had visited Bulgaria for this purpose, but the Liberal Parties had not been willing to enter the Government on the conditions offered to them[[5]](#footnote-5). M. Vyshinsky was now suggesting that there was an obligation on the Americans and ourselves either to bring pressure to bear on the Liberal Parties in Bulgaria to join the Government or to recognise the existing Government as it stood.

The Foreign Secretary said that he did not propose to be hurried in this matter. The situation in Bulgaria was confused, and he had called for a further appreciation from the British representative in Sofia. He had also asked for information about an exchange of views on this subject which had taken place between Mr. Byrnes and M. Vyshinsky before the former left London. He was not, therefore, in a position to make any definite recommendation to the Cabinet at the moment.

The Cabinet: -

(2) Took note of the Foreign Secretary’s statement regarding the recognition of the Bulgarian Government.

2. The Foreign Secretary reported the latest developments regarding the Persian appeal to the Security Council[[6]](#footnote-6). He could not yet say what course would be followed by the new Persian Government; but he had no intention of agreeing to any proposal that the complaints about Greece and Indonesia should now be withdrawn from the Security Council on the ground that the new Persian Government were prepared to negotiate direct with the Soviet Government about their difficulties in Northern Persia. He believed that M. Vyshinsky was now inclined to doubt the expediency of the tactics adopted by the Soviet Delegation in this matter. It was even possible that this incident might cause the Soviet Government to reflect that the methods which they had recently applied in bringing pressure to bear on smaller Powers were not always profitable.

The Cabinet: -

Took note of the Foreign Secretary’s statement.

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Keywords: Bulgaria, post-war Eastern Europe, Iran

1. This refers to representatives of the main, so-called “historical” Romanian parties: the National Liberal Party and the National Peasants’ Party. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. A meeting of Vyshinsky, Kerr and Harriman with King Mihail I took place on 1 January 1946 and was largely constructive. At the same time, the election of actual candidates from opposition parties for inclusion in the Government revealed the contradictory nature of Soviet and Western perspectives. For more detail see: Sovetskii faktor v Vostochnoi Evrope. Т. 1. S. 260–262, 266. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. In all likelihood refers to: Stevenson, Donald – British Air Vice-Marshal, British High Commissioner in Romania (1944 – 1947). For more detail about his actions in Romania see: Dudoi M.-A. ‘The Activity of Air Vice Marshal Donald F. Stevenson, Head of the British Military Mission in Romania (1944 – 1945)’ *Analele Banatului. Arheologie – Istorie* Vol. 20. (2012), p. 355–360. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. In the opinion of the editors of a recent collection of documents on Soviet policy in East and Central Europe, ‘The Foreign Office believed that Hungary and Romania were countries where decisive Soviet influence should be allowed, even if this meant communization, as they had no bearing on the British position in the Eastern Mediterranean’ (Introduction // *Soviet Occupation of Romania, Hungary, and Austria 1944/45 – 1948/49* / Ed. by C. Békés, L. Borhi, p. Ruggenthaler, O. Traşcă. (Budapest, 2015), p. 14). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The terms of the talks with the opposition were set by the Council of Ministers of Bulgaria on 3 January 1946 and included recognition by the opposition – both inside and outside the country – of the Government of K. Georgiev, agreement that the ‘admission of two representatives from opposition groups does not constitute a reorganisation of the Government’, curtailing of opposition ‘disloyalty’ to the Government, etc. (see: Sovetskii faktor v Vostochnoi Evrope. Т. 1. S. 267). In all likelihood, the delegation of the Bulgarian Government headed by Georgiev discussed them with Stalin on 7 January (in the course of a visit to Moscow on 7-10 January), and they were then presented by Vyshinsky at the talks in Sofia with the leader of the Bulgarian Social Democratic Workers’ Party K. Lulchev (on the 8 January) and with the leader of the Bulgarian Agrarian National Union N. Petkov (on 9 January). Both of these meetings Dimitrov summarised in his diary as ‘fruitless discussion’ (The Diary of Georgi Dimitrov. p. 395). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Refers to the letter from the head of the Iranian delegation to the UN, S.H. Taqizadeh, addressed to the Secretary of the Executive Committee of the Preparatory Commission for the UN dated 19 January in which the USSR was accused of interfering in the internal affairs of Iran and of fomenting the conditions of international conflict. After thorough questioning of the Iranian delegation, being guided by Point 1 Article 35 of the Charter, the General Secretary of the UN was asked to introduce the issue of the Iranian dispute with the Soviet Union for discussion at the Security Council (Gasanli Dzh. SSSR – Iran. S. 233–234; Jamil Hasanli, *At the Dawn of the Cold War: the Soviet-American crisis over Iranian Azerbaijan 1941 - 1946* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2006), p.188). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)