From a telegram from Minister for Foreign Affairs of the USSR, V.M. Molotov, to the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, I.V. Stalin, 23 November 1946

CIPHER TEXT

SOCHI

TO COMRADE DRUZHKOV

[…]

In connection with your considerations which I fully support, I believe it is necessary to modify my suggestions on the issue of “directly interested countries” regarding trusteeship.

On this issue, as well as on the whole issue of trusteeship and of agreements concerning mandate territories, we will suggest to Britain and the USA to agree on the following:

1. To establish a principle that each of five great powers - permanent members of Security Council - has the right to declare that it is a “directly interested party” (article 79 of the Charter[[1]](#footnote-1)) concerning any mandate of the former League of Nations, including mandates of Japan and the former colonies of Italy;

2. At present, not to determine the concept of “directly interested state”, having postponed determination of this concept until the next session of the General Assembly; and determination of this concept should be made according to the principle specified in the first item;

3. To approve the agreements on mandate territories presented to the General Assembly without preliminary determination of “directly interested party” provided that the issue of the bases will be transferred for approval of the Security Council;

4. To declare on our behalf (in case of our partners’ consent with specified items 1, 2, and 3) that we will formally not apply for inclusion of the Soviet Union in the number of “directly interested states” concerning the agreements submitted for approval by the present session of the General Assembly;

5. If this arrangement is reached, to get it documented by an exchange with the USA and Britain of corresponding letters or minutes.

I should explain that, at present, the issue under discussion are the mandate territories which belonged to Germany before the First World War, short of Palestine. The agreements to be approved by this session of the General Assembly concern the former German dominions, namely: in Central Africa - Togo (French and British mandates), Cameroon (French and British mandates), Tanganyika (British), Rwanda - Burundi (Belgian); Pacific Ocean - New Guinea (Australia), Western Samoa (New Zealand). All listed mandate territories belonged to Germany before the First World War and since 1920 are governed under mandates of the League of Nations by Britain, France, Belgium, New Zealand and Australia. At present, the issue does not concern mandates of Japan and colonies of Italy.

This Assembly does not have the draft agreements on Palestine (Britain is delaying), on Transjordan (at the excuse of declared independence), on South West Africa (which the South African Union demands to be joined to it). Concerning these territories, we insist that corresponding agreements are submitted for approval by the General Assembly at least next year. Hence, concerning these territories we still reserve the right to declare our “direct interest”.

The spirit of our present suggestion is the following: the USSR makes the mandatory states free concerning the former mandates in Africa and two mandates in the Pacific Ocean, reserving its formal rights for intervention in the decision of the future of Palestine, South West Africa and Transjordan, though concerning the latter we are unlikely to change anything.

For this concession we want to ensure our rights concerning the Italian colonies (in case they join the UNO, a year after coming into force of peace treaties) and concerning Japanese mandates in the Pacific Ocean. Thus, we declare our rights concerning any future territory under guardianship. And finally, we also limit the rights of the mandatory states in Africa regarding creation of military bases in these territories.

It will be very difficult to get consent from the Anglo-Americans to the five items presented above (they will especially object to items 1 and 3), but it is necessary to undertake this business and then negotiations will clarify the final decisions. I will notify on that to avoid making any unforeseen decisions.

Waiting for your approval or different instructions.

[…]

MOLOTOV

New York.

[RSASPH, f. 17, inv. 167, file 72, pp. 224–226]

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1. That article stipulates, as follows: ‘The terms of trusteeship for each territory to be placed under the trusteeship system, including any alteration or amendment, shall be agreed upon by the states directly concerned, including the mandatory power in the case of territories held under mandate by a Member of the United Nations’. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)