Message from F. Gusev, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR, to V.M. Molotov containing remarks and suggestions regarding the forthcoming session of the Council of Foreign Ministers in London, 17 October 1947

To Comrade V.M. Molotov.

I send you some remarks and suggests regarding the forthcoming session of the Council of Foreign Ministers in London at the end of November this year. During the last six months I had no opportunity to study the operational traffic on the issue of Germany, so it is difficult for me to make specific proposals, thus I limited myself to just general observations on the issues which, in my opinion, are of greatest importance.

F. GUSEV[[1]](#footnote-1)

October 17, 1947

Yalta.

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Copies are sent to Comrades Malik and Smirnov[[2]](#footnote-2).

TO THE SESSION OF Council of Foreign Ministers in London in NOVEMBER, 1947[[3]](#footnote-3)

(Remarks and suggestions)

The forthcoming session of Council of Foreign Ministers in London at the end of November of this year is assembled under conditions of increasing disagreements on the issue of Germany and exacerbation of relations between the British-American bloc on one hand and the Soviet Union on the other hand. This situation has the following features:

1) The Council of Foreign Ministers at the last session in March - April of this year in Moscow could not come to agreement on any important issue of the agenda. It happened because of the position of the British-American bloc which, violating the earlier agreements on Germany, took the way of division of Germany by consolidating its British and American zones under the rule of the British-American bloc.

At present France has not yet united its zone with the British-American zone, but in this respect France is under a lot of pressure and influence on behalf of British-Americans[[4]](#footnote-4).

1. After the Council of Foreign Ministers session in Moscow the policy of the British-American bloc for the division of Germany developed further. During this time minor issues continued to isolate British-American zones. United economic bodies were established in the United British-American zone[[5]](#footnote-5), their structures enabling them to quickly transform into Western German federal political bodies.
2. Coordinated action on decisions made at the Moscow Council of Foreign Ministers session on minor issues of the Control Council report are not being carried out in the Western zones. In the last six months the Control Council could not solve any important issue regarding Germany as a whole. Practical work of joint bodies in Germany revealed that the British-American bloc strive towards eliminating any of Soviet Union’s influence on decisions on issues concerning the Western zones, and preserving and expanding British-American influence in the Soviet zone and in Berlin. In this respect, the agreement on the allocation of the Greater Berlin zone for joint government appeared favourable for the British and the Americans[[6]](#footnote-6).
3. At the meeting in Paris (June 1947) Bevin failed in his plan to involve the Soviet Union in discussions on the German question outside of the Council of Foreign Ministers. The meeting of 16 countries’ representatives in Paris regarding the so-called Marshall Plan took place without participation of the USSR[[7]](#footnote-7).
4. The Anti-Soviet imperialistic policy of the US, both in Europe (Greece, Turkey and the Balkans) and in the Far East (Japan, Korea and China) caused aggravation of American-Soviet relations. Ruling reactionary circles in the US took the way of active propaganda and preparation of a new war against the Soviet Union and the countries of new democracy in Europe.
5. Lately the US are actively trying to use the United Nations Organization as a tool for their imperialistic foreign policy (the US’ position in the Atomic Energy Commission, in Security Council and at the last session of the General Assembly).

The Soviet Union is the only country which is able to expose the USA’s aggressive plans for preparing a new war and to prevent the USA from using the United Nations Organization for its imperialistic policy.

The Soviet Union’s democratic policy for establishing stable peace will encounter different forms of resistance from US reactionary ruling circles. The state of relations between allies-defeaters of Germany enables us to forecast that at the forthcoming Council of Foreign Ministers session in London we should not expect the British-American bloc to display a spirit of cooperation in implementing decisions of the Crimean and Berlin conferences[[8]](#footnote-8). Most likely the opposite will happen: at this Council of Foreign Ministers session attempts will be made to declare the Potsdam decisions outdated and requiring replacement with new ones. In this case, you can expect a repeat of demagogic accusations against the Soviet Union, who allegedly did not carry out these decisions. There is a possibility that at the Council of Foreign Ministers session the British-American bloc will submit for consideration a proposal that regards the initial stage of Germany’s occupation as complete (item 10 of Agreement on Control Machinery), which would require new negotiations on an agreement on the new governing system in Germany, and, hence, new instructions to supervisory bodies. We also cannot exclude the possibility of raising issues such as the timing of the occupation and the alteration of governing methods (instead of supervisory authorities, just the occupation).

In connection with the convening of the session of the Council of Ministers arise a number of issues. First of all, there is the question of the agenda. What issues and in what order will be put forward for discussion to the Council of Foreign Ministers? It is known that in the last Council session decisions on all the main issues of the agenda were left undecided. As these issues remain undecided, they should be discussed, but it would hardly be advisable to start a discussion in the order in which they were held during the last session. If we assume the same order as the discussions at the last session, then from the outset, you can predetermine the failure of the Council session.

The agenda of the Council session will be discussed beforehand, apparently, at the conference of deputies in London. The agenda will probably include the issues concerning Germany and Austria. The British-American bloc will probably insist on discussing primarily issues concerning agreements with Austria. If in the very beginning an agreement on Austria is achieved, which is not very likely, then it would make it easier to for resolving issues concerning Germany.

The regular session of the Council of Foreign Ministers will be of great importance for the Soviet Union. Nowadays, not only economic issues, such as reparations, but also political issues, are becoming more and more important for establishing a stable peace in Europe. What will Germany be like: democratic and united or reactionary and federal, a tool in the hands of imperialistic reaction of the US and Great Britain? Nowadays it becomes more and more clear that the British-American bloc is afraid of a democratic Germany and thus strives to transform it into the base of European reaction.

What are the questions that the Soviet Union should consider most important for the protection of its interests and expansion of the programme for the German people? These are the issues regarding the question of preparation for the peace treaty with Germany and the directives in connection with this preparation. Under present conditions, when the American warmongers conduct propaganda and war preparation, the issue of the peace treaty with Germany could serve as means of exposing the Anglo-American bloc’s policies and at the same time serve as a near future prospect for the German people. During preparation of directives for the peace treaty, the drafting of some important issues could be decided, such as reparations. At the same time, there would inevitably arise such issues as Germany’s political and economic unity, since the peace treaty may be concluded not with separate parts, but with uniform German state.

During the last six months in the USA, there were repeated suggestions of concluding a separate peace treaty with Germany. Such statements were apparently taken from the American propaganda arsenal to influence the USSR’s position on the issue of Germany.

The Soviet Union suggestion on drafting the peace treaty with Germany would have important international political value for peace support. Yet at the last Council session the Soviet delegation made a number of concessions regarding the procedure of the peace treaty drafting with Germany. If the USA once again impedes the resolution of this issue, they will be responsible for the delay of peace being established in Europe. The Soviet Union has no reasons to refuse discussing other issues which still remain unresolved, but if the discussions go the same way as at the last session, it may come to a deadlock and give no practical results. The British-American bloc, which wants to divide Germany, needs formal reasons for justification of their policy, thus any failure and difficulties in resolving the issues will be used by the British-Americans to prove that now it is impossible to solve the issue of Germany’s political and economic unity on a quadrilateral basis.

Under these conditions the Soviet Union has a big task. Remaining on the basis of the Crimean and Berlin conferences decisions, protecting these decisions, we should expose the manoeuvres of British-Americans, compel them to fulfil the decided-on obligations and reveal their true intentions on the issue of Germany.

The Soviet Union has relatively few effective tools for influencing the Anglo-Americans to carry out the obligations accepted by them in accordance with the agreements. However, it would be erroneous to underestimate the Anglo-American bloc’s great interest in the outcome of German question and, in particular, its interest in what is in the Soviet zone of occupation.

According to the occupied zones agreement, a Greater Berlin zone was to be formed where all-German organs would have been, but if Germany remains broken up without all-German organs, there is no need to have a special zone with British, US and French participation.

The Anglo-American forces’ presence in the Greater Berlin zone[[9]](#footnote-9) gives them not only access to information on the situation in the Soviet zone, but also an opportunity to influence the population in the Soviet-occupied zone via their sectors in the city of Berlin. The Soviet administration in Germany does not have such an opportunity in the Western zones. Britain and the US greatly value their presence in Berlin. It is obvious, since after Germany’s capitulation Britain and the US moved their armies from a part of German territory, for example, Thuringia[[10]](#footnote-10), to be occupied by the Soviet armies, in order to bring them to Berlin and occupy the sectors of Big Berlin allocated to them in accordance with the occupation zones agreement.

If at the forthcoming Council of Foreign Ministers session Britain and the USA will not satisfy the legal requirements of the Soviet Union, in particular, on reparations, on the joint control over Ruhr, etc., perhaps the Soviet Union will have to raise the issue of abolishing the Greater Berlin zone and declare all of all this territory as part of the Soviet zone. Certainly, it is an extreme measure and should be used only when there would be no hope for an agreement.

The forthcoming Council of Foreign Ministers session in London should be used by the Soviet Union for raising the issue on the report of Allied Council for Japan and on drafting of the peace treaty with Japan. Perhaps already now, approximately a month before the beginning of Council of Foreign Ministers session, we ought to introduce in a diplomatic manner a proposal to the US, British and Chinese governments to include the Allied Council’s report on Japan at the Council of Foreign Ministers session in London when the review of the German question will be completed. In fact, it would be a new Council of Foreign Ministers session with a new composition. If the suggestions on the Allied Council report on Japan and on drafting the peace treaty with Japan are put forward by the Soviet Union, it would give us some tactical advantage during the discussion of the German issue as well.

The US will probably not wish to hear the Allied Council report, as such a report would expose its policy in Japan, but even in this case the position of the US would be exposed to the global public opinion. In this case, the position of the Soviet Union would probably be supported by China.

In connection with the session of the Council of Ministers in London there are a number of practical issues that can be prepared with the availability of documents from the Council of the last session and the prompt correspondence in Berlin during the intervals between Council of Ministers sessions.

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1. Gusev, Fyodor Tarasovich (1905-1987) - Soviet diplomat. Soviet ambassador to Canada (1942-1943), Soviet ambassador to the UK (1943-1946), Deputy Minister of the Foreign Affairs of the USSR (1946-1952). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Smirnov, Andrey Andreyevich (1905-1982) - Soviet diplomat. Soviet Ambassador to Iran (1941-1943), Head of the 3rd European Department of the NKID (from 1946 it became the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) of the USSR (1943 - 1949), Deputy Minister of the Foreign Affairs of the RSFSR (1946-1949), Member of the Collegium of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR (1946-1949), Member of the Apparat of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks (1949 - 1956) - this became the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union from 1952; Soviet ambassador to Austria (1956-1957), Soviet ambassador to West Germany (1957-1966), Soviet ambassador to Turkey (1966-1969), Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs (1969-1973), Chairman of the Soviet Committee on UNESCO Affairs (1970-1973). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The 5th session of the Council of Foreign Ministers was held in London between 25 November and 15 December 1947. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The French Government feared major reunification of German territories and thus prevented any attempts at reunification until 1947, advocating strong federalisation. The Monnet Plan of 1946 saw France seeking to exercise control over the Ruhr and Saar regions, the principal industrial centres in Germany. In political terms, this meant at the very least, international control over the Ruhr. In mid-1947 Great Britain and the United States applied pressure on the French Government, advancing a demand that France should not oppose economic unification of the German zones of occupation. This was in exchange for support in the face of a shortage of coal. See Boldyrev, O. M., *Jean Monnet: At the Origins of a United Europe* (Yelets, 2008). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The Bizonal Economic Council began functioning on 10 June 1947 as a *de facto* legislative body, the prototype of the Bundestag. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. The situation in Berlin deteriorated significantly after the elections of 20 October 1946, in which the SED won less than 20% of the votes. This led to the election of the Social Democrat, Ernst Reuter, as mayor, who was not recognised by the Soviets. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. A meeting of sixteen countries was held on 12 July 1946. In attendance were all the major Western European countries. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Yalta and Potsdam. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Greater Berlin was territory lying contiguous with Old Berlin that was subsumed in 1920. This territory was significant in area. The zones of occupation of Greater Berlin were distributed proportionally. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. American troops left Thuringia in July 1945, having been allocated allied zones of occupation in Berlin instead. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)