From the diary of the USSR Ambassador to Great Britain F. T. Gusev, 14 January, 1944.

SECRET.

# RECORD OF CONVERSATION WITH EDEN ON THE 14th of JANUARY 1944

On the 14th of January, after the meeting of the European Consultative Commission had been concluded, Strang[[1]](#footnote-1) told me that Eden urgently wished to see me in the Foreign Office. […].

 At 16:20, I arrived at the Foreign Office, where I was at once led to see Eden. Eden stated that he wished to talk to me about Polish affairs. "In the last few days", said Eden, "I have had several conversations with Mikołajczyk[[2]](#footnote-2) and Romer[[3]](#footnote-3)." At the latest consultative meeting held today in the afternoon, Mikołajczyk and Romer, in the name of the Polish government, stated that the government was ready to negotiate with the Soviet government on all issues, including the question of the border. There is no consensus among the members of the Polish government and it is possible that, after the publication of today's declaration[[4]](#footnote-4), Sosnkowski[[5]](#footnote-5) and, maybe, other members of the government, will resign from the Polish cabinet. Eden believes that the acquiescence of the Polish government to negotiate on all questions with the Soviet government is a step towards reaching an agreement. Since the Polish government has no relations with the Soviet government, it requested the American and the British governments to act as a middle-man and participate in the normalization of the Soviet-Polish relations. Further, Eden said that he knew the position of the Soviet government on the Polish question and therefore considered Moscow would be the best place for the discussion of Polish affairs. The British and the American ambassadors in Moscow could take part in the negotiations. Eden informed me that the Polish government offered to publish their response to the declaration of the Soviet government on the 15th of January. He showed me the Polish declaration and asked of my opinion on the Polish suggestion to hold negotiations with the Soviet government and about the declaration. I answered that I had no instructions from the Soviet government to discuss Polish affairs but, in my personal opinion, neither the first nor the second Polish declaration[[6]](#footnote-6) help in establishing friendly relations between Poland and the USSR. The policy of the Polish government towards the USSR remains hostile because the Polish government holds a hostile attitude towards the USSR. It is not clear from the second declaration how the Polish government sees the basis for negotiations with the Soviet government. Eden objected, saying that the majority in Mikołajczyk's government wished for an agreement with the USSR and that the Poles knew the Soviet suggestions and were ready to discuss them. I noted that it was Sosnkowski and not Mikołajczyk who held the leading role in the Polish government. I declared that, in my opinion, the proposal and the Polish declaration were unacceptable for the Soviet government and, moreover, I do not see any sign of sincere intentions of the Polish government to change its hostile policy toward the Soviet Union. Eden protested, stating that he did not see me as willing to achieving an agreement with the Poles. "I know it from Beneš, said Eden, "that Marshall Stalin toasted for Mikołajczyk"[[7]](#footnote-7) and, in Eden's opinion, this indicated goodwill. Eden continued: "Why can you not give Mikołajczyk an opportunity to find a way for an agreement with the USSR?" "You do not lose anything from trying and I am convinced", said Eden, "that provided there is willingness on both sides, you would achieve success." I replied to Eden, that he was well aware of the general Soviet line towards Poland. The Soviet government wants to deal with a government, which would in reality represent Poland and would be capable of establishing friendly relations with the USSR. The government of Mikołajczyk is not such a government but continues pursuing the old Polish policy, hostile to the USSR. Eden asked me if I could pass on the suggestions of the Polish government to the Soviet government. I replied that if Eden considers it necessary to pass on his own suggestions along with the suggestions of the Polish government, then I would pass it on, but I have already expressed my opinion.
 Eden passed on the text of the Polish declaration.

 Eden's statement that the Polish declaration will be published on January 15, as it turned out later, was untrue, since at 8:00. PM the declaration was passed on to journalists, and at 12 hr. was to be broadcast over the radio[[8]](#footnote-8).

[FPARF, f. 069, inv. 29, fold. 86, file 10, pp. 25–27]

Keywords: Poland

1. Strang, William (1893 – 1978) – British diplomat, Assistant Under-Secretary at Foreign Office (1939 – 1943), U.K. Representative at European Advisory Commission (1943 – 1945), Political Adviser to Commander-in-Chief of the British forces in Germany (1945 – 1947), Permanent Under-Secretary for the German Section at Foreign Office (1947 – 1949), Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (1949 – 1953). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Mikołajczyk, Stanisław (1901 – 1966) – Polish statesman and politician, Deputy Prime Minister (1940 – 1943), Prime Minister of the Polish Government-in-Exile (1943 – 1944), Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Agriculture and Agricultural Reform of the Provisional Government of National Unity in Poland (1945 – 1947). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Romer, Tadeusz (1894 – 1978) – Polish politician and diplomat, Polish Ambassador to USSR (1942 – 1943), representative of the Polish Government-in-Exile in the Middle East (1943), Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Polish Government-in-Exile (1943 – 1944). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Declaration is attached to the Soviet record of the conversation. It included a call for negotiations between Poland and the USSR, with the United Kingdom and the United States as mediators; and emphasized the refusal for the recognition of territorial changes in Poland, which took place after 1939. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Sosnkowski, Kazimierz (1885 – 1969) – Polish General, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed forces of the Polish Government-in-Exile (1943 – 1944). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. The first declaration of S. Mikołajczyk’s government was published on J5 anuary 1944 and caused a sharp response from the USSR. In the ‘The Soviet Government’s Statement on Soviet-Polish relations’ of 11 January, the London-exiled government was labelled as unfit for establishing relations with the USSR and the organization of joint struggle for the liberation of Poland. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. The atmosphere at the reception in the Kremlin December 11, 1943 in honour of the Czechoslovak delegation was indeed warm. However, Benes’ Chief of Staff Smutný’s account, there was no mention of Stalin making a toast in honour of Mikołajczyk (published in Peregovory E. Benesha v Moskve (dekabr’ 1943 g.) // Voprosy istorii. 2001. №1. p. 12–13). From the conversation with the Polish Professor Lange, held in May 1944 in Moscow, Stalin's opinion of Mikołajczyk and his role in the Polish government coincided with the Gusev’s position: "Apparently, he [Mikołajczyk] is a pushover. Sosnkowski plays the leading role. He has intelligence network and agents in the Polish embassies and in Poland. Sosnkowski a man of character. However, he is not wrong in the right place. Mikołajczyk is in his hands". (published in: Noskova А.F. Stalin i Pol’sha, 1943 – 1944 gody // Novaya i noveyshaya istoriya. 2008. №3. p. 127). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Eden was dissatisfied with the conversation that took place with Gusev, believing that the Soviet government had undervalued the British efforts to mitigate the Polish position. See: From FO to Moscow, 17/02/1944 // TNA, FO 954/20. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)