From the diary of the USSR Ambassador to Great Britain F.T. Gusev, 9 February 1944.

Secret

RECORD OF CONVERSATION WITH EDEN, the 9th of FEBRUARY 1944

On the 9th of February, I organized a reciprocal breakfast with Eden. Low, Cadogan, Sargent[[1]](#footnote-1), Warner[[2]](#footnote-2) attended. From our side, Lebedev[[3]](#footnote-3), Sobolev, Borisenko[[4]](#footnote-4) and Zinchenko attended.

The following questions discussed at breakfast and afterwards deserve attention: […]

5. Eden raised the issue of the Poles, saying that he was working a lot for our benefit and, he added after a pause, also for the benefit of the British government. I responded, saying that Eden had been working, above all, for the benefit of the British and the Polish governments. "You have to understand," addressed me Eden directly, "that I can continue directing foreign policy provided our relations continue to be normal and friendly. Right now, the Polish question has attracted a lot of attention in England and the US. Therefore the allies are looking forward to the resolution of this question." I asked Eden, why it was necessary to publicly discuss and publish the Polish declarations, which were unacceptable for the Soviet government. "It was not the British government that started the discussion", answered Eden.

"In any case, neither did the Soviet government", I said. I told Eden that he had all the necessary means for a positive resolution on this issue. In his latest telegram to the Prime Minister Churchill, comrade Stalin outlined a way forward[[5]](#footnote-5).

 I told Eden that the agents of the Polish government were calling on the Polish people to fight against the Red Army[[6]](#footnote-6); essentially, such a call was conveyed to the Polish underground in October of last year. Eden disagreed, saying that the instructions of the Polish government contained no such calls[[7]](#footnote-7). I reminded Eden that the first Polish document he had passed over to me for the Soviet government stated that the underground movement in Poland would cooperate with the detachments of the Red Army provided relations between the two sides were normalized. However, relations between the two sides had not yet been normalized. If the Red Army moved onto the Polish territory and came into contact with the armed detachments, which were under the direction of the Polish government, how would they react? Eden did not respond to that question and said that Mikołajczyk was working on the new directive to the underground movement. Eden had seen a draft of the directive, which contained a direct order to cooperate with the Red Army. In the past few days Churchill had a series of meetings with Mikołajczyk and there would be another meeting tomorrow[[8]](#footnote-8). "You do not object against Mikołajczyk staying in the government but Mikołajczyk himself is not sure whether he would be able to return to Warsaw."

 "This depends on Mikołajczyk", I responded "on what position he is going to take."

 Eden said that in the morning a parliamentary delegation from the Conservative Party had paid him a visit, enquiring about the state of the Soviet-Polish relations. Eden informed the delegation but could not satisfy their interest. The public in Britain, the US and other countries expressed big interest and were impatiently expecting a decision[[9]](#footnote-9).

Eden said that in the course of his political career, he had not experienced a question more complicated than the Polish question turned out to be. However, the situation was not hopeless. We had to find a solution.

"Pass it on to Molotov", said Eden, "that we are trying to find solutions and, provided the willingness and goodwill on both sides, we will find one."

Soviet ambassador in Great Britain [Signature] (F. Gusev)

[FPARF, f. 069, inv. 26, fold. 86, file 10, pp. 40–46]

Keywords: Poland

1. Sargent, Orme Garton (1884 – 1962) – British diplomat and civil servant, Deputy Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office (1939 – 1946), Permanent Under Secretary (1945 – 1949). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Warner, Christopher (1890 – 1970) – British diplomat and civil servant, Under-Secretary of the Foreign Office, Northern Department (1941 – 1946). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Lebedev, Viktor Zakharovich (1900 - 1968) - Soviet diplomat, ambassador of the USSR to the allied governments in London (1943 - 1945), Soviet Ambassador to Poland (1945 - 1951), the USSR envoy in Finland (1951 - 1954). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Borisenko, D.G., Trade Representative of the USSR in the UK (1941 - 1944). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. In a letter dated 4 February (received in London the next day), Stalin pointed out the need for the Polish government in London to agree to the Curzon Line as the border between the USSR and Poland and to changing the makeup of the government. He expressed readiness to have Poland’s borders expand to the west and for the transfer of Konigsberg to the USSR. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Stalin voiced a similar position in Tehran: "The Polish Government and their friends in Poland were in contact with the Germans. They killed partisans” (Record of a Conversation at the Soviet Embassy, Tehran, on 1st December, 1943 (in W.P. (44) 8) // TNA, CAB 66/45). Sovetskaya zapis’ v: Tegeranskaya konferentsiya. p. 163. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. In a British intelligence report on the Polish situation, the problems in the interaction between Soviet partisans and Polish forces were attributed to the local situation, and were not directly linked with the instructions given by the Polish government-in-exile. In one report, written by a British officer who spent a few weeks in Poland, which Eden sent out to the Cabinet members in August 1944: “In general, the Polish partisans deplored the fact that they were under instructions to help the Russian partisans, arguing that this would merely assist in permanent Soviet occupation of the territory where they were operating ... the Russian partisans, on their side blamed the Poles as bad neighbours who had wished in the past to annex the Ukraine ... the relations between Poles and Russians were those of an armed neutrality”. (WP (44) 447, Memo by Eden, 15/08/1944 // TNA, CAB 66/53). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Churchill held meetings with Mikołajczyk on 20 January and 6 February. Churchill was unhappy with the intransigence of the Polish side. For an example, see: Record of a Meeting Held at Chequers on Sunday, 06/02/1944 // TNA, FO 954/20. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Eden’s statements were partially endorsed in US State Department’s materials. In March 1944, the US Office noted that "Unlike the bulk of the press, the majority of the American people apparently do not support Russia's claims to the disputed territory; nor does the majority support the Polish claim”. See: Public Attitudes towards Russia (Jan. 15 - Feb. 15), 01/03/1944 // National Archives and Records Administration, Recond Group 59, DF 711.61 / 986. Published in: Put’ k Velikoy Pobede, p. 559 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)