From the diary of the USSR Ambassador to Great Britain F.T. Gusev, 5 June 1944.

Secret

RECORD OF THE CONVERSATION AT DINNER AT EDEN’S

1 June 9:30 - 12:20

Eden’s wife[[1]](#footnote-1) invited me and my wife to a dinner at the Foreign Office on 1 June. When we arrived at the Foreign Office, among those invited to the dinner were Churchill with his wife, Bevin[[2]](#footnote-2) with his wife, and Winant[[3]](#footnote-3).

Mostly Churchill and Bevin spoke during and after dinner. Churchill was in a good mood and told many anecdotes. [...] Among the issues that are worth mentioning, it is necessary to note the following:

[...] Churchill [...] started the conversation about the British Navy handing over to the Soviet Navy something like 13 ships, but so far we have not had any thanks from anyone. Clearly, says Churchill, we pass these ships, part of the Italian Navy, but we are not yet able to use the Italian Navy ourselves.

2. Churchill said that he is considering the issue of resuming the convoys to Northern ports, but before it can begin, it is necessary to wait and see what will happen to the major operation. The time is approaching. Preparations have been carried out on a large scale, but the success of the operation will greatly depend on the weather. […] Over 4000 vessels are prepared for the operation, with over 600-700 tons displacement each, not counting barges and smaller vessels. Churchill remarked that the Allies’ troops will have to sustain a bloody fight with heavy losses. Bevin remarked that with such preparation and good technical equipment for the means of transportation and landing, one could hope that the operation would be a success. […]

3. Referring to the latest message from Comrade Stalin[[4]](#footnote-4), Churchill said that Marshal Stalin seems to be satisfied with our level of preparation for the big operations. “I inform Marshal Stalin,” said Churchill, “on the most important issues. It is difficult to correspond on other issues. If I could meet with Marshal Stalin, I am sure we would be able to agree on many issues and resolve a number of misunderstandings within one or two days. After my illness I have difficulty with flying, and the doctors advise me against long journeys.” I asked Churchill which misunderstandings he has in mind. Churchill said with agitation that he has explained to Molotov in detail the entire story with the English parachutists in Romania[[5]](#footnote-5). “Molotov does not believe me and suspects us of some conspiracy. We concluded a treaty, took upon ourselves to co-operate with each other, and such co-operation may only be on the basis of mutual trust, not suspicions. I communicated to Molotov everything that we knew ourselves on the parachutists in Romania, but they do not believe me. If I met Marshal Stalin personally, it would be possible to dispel this suspicion.”

4. Churchill asked me what I think will be in 25-30 years. I said that it is difficult to make predictions now for such a long period of time. Then Churchill continued that the future of the world depends on co-operation between the USSR, the USA and Great Britain, Winant added – and China. Churchill replied that China cannot be considered a serious military power. If we do not have co-operation and mutual understanding between us, a new catastrophe is inevitable. Addressing me, Churchill said that we can conclude an alliance agreement with you after the war, for 30 or 50 years. Winant remarked that a 30 year agreement would be better. Churchill continued, we fought against Napoleon together with Russia in the last century. We fought against Kaiser Germany in the beginning of this century, and we are fighting against Hitler together now. We have a desire to co-operate and we have agreed to be allies for 20 years, but this co-operation should be based on mutual trust. I think, said Churchill, that the Russians’ claims to maintain their Western border are justified and I will support them. [...] The losses borne by Russia in the last war and now justify the Russians’ claims, but the issue of Poland should be solved fairly. Bevin joined the conversation, saying that if the Soviet Government agreed to accept the Curzon line, passing Lvov to the Poles, it would receive approval and support in the whole world[[6]](#footnote-6). The Soviet Government could resolve the issue of the border in one day if it agreed to negotiate with the Polish Government in London. Bevin asked me why Molotov refused to meet with Mikolajczyk and Romer. I replied to Bevin that it is a well known fact that the Polish Government has rejected the proposal of the Soviet Government to recognise the Curzon line as a necessary prerequisite for the negotiations on the settlement of the Soviet-Polish relations, and continues its hostile policy towards the USSR. Bevin said that the Soviet Government wants to force the Polish Government to *a priori* agree with all the proposals and to act as a suppliant. The Polish nation is bound by a treaty with Great Britain. It was one of the first to suffer aggression. It has been suffering for 5 years. Therefore the Polish Government cannot agree to further humiliation. I remarked that the Polish Government does not represent the Polish people; there are other forces in Poland itself that are indeed fighting against Hitlerite Germany. Churchill replied to this, looking ferocious and talking in a loud voice, we do not want a Quisling[[7]](#footnote-7) Polish Government, we could set up Quisling governments on the territories of the European states, but we do not want it. The Polish nation has been oppressed for three hundred years, and naturally, it will strive to preserve its existence and independence. A unilateral decision on the issue of Poland might bring something new to our relations.

I remarked that the Soviet Government is no less interested to achieve the right decision on the issue of Poland, but it cannot agree to the policy of Pilsudski[[8]](#footnote-8) and Beck[[9]](#footnote-9)’s followers being restored and for Poland to be hostile towards the USSR. Bevin once again began to argue that the Soviet Government could resolve all issues with the Polish Government within a few days, if it would wish so. I asked Bevin if he thinks it’s possible for the British Government to deal with such a government that openly and directly declares its hostility and tries to poison the atmosphere of the British-Soviet relations. [...] Bevin said once again that the British trade unions are very sympathetic towards the Poles and the positive resolution of the issue of Poland could significantly strengthen the unity among the Allies.

As Bevin mentioned once again that the Soviet Union should give Lvov to Poland, Churchill said that he gave his consent and will consider as fair the Russians’ claims to the territory to the east of the Curzon line, including the city of Lvov. “You are a strong power,” said Churchill, “but we are not a degenerative nation either, as some would think.” I remarked that I do not know whom the Prime Minister means, but I know it very well that in the Soviet Union Great Britain is not considered a degenerative nation. At the end of the conversation, when Churchill left, Winant in the presence of Eden said that a resolution of the Poland question would with it resolve the issue of Bessarabia and the Baltic states. I remarked that the former Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian envoys are in London and are recognised by the British Government.

Eden said that the British Government does not recognise them as envoys. I remarked that in the list of diplomatic corps the afore mentioned envoys are listed as diplomatic agents. Eden said that these people were added at the end of the list so that they could receive food coupons.

As a result of the conversation with Churchill I had an impression that his appearance at the dinner at Eden’s is explained by the intention to somehow mitigate his escapades against me and also to respond to our information on the arrival of four representatives of the National Council of Poland to Moscow[[10]](#footnote-10).

[Signed] (F. Gusev)

[FPARF, f. 069, inv. 28, fold. 86, file 11, pp. 19–23]

Keywords: Inter-allied relations, post-war order, Poland

1. Beckett, Beatrice Helen (1905 – 1957) – wife of A. Eden, 1923–1946. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Bevin, Ernest (1881 – 1951) – British statesman and politician, Minister of Labour and National Service (1940–1945), Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (1945–1951), Lord Privy Seal (1951). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Winant, John Gilbert (1889 – 1947) – US politician and diplomat, Ambassador to UK (1941–1946), US representative to UNESCO (1946–1947). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. This appears mostMost likely Churchill referred to be a reference tothe letter dated 30 May, in which Stalin expressed hopeshope for a successful conclusion toof the battles in Italy, "which will undoubtedly make it easier to carry out efforts related to the implementation of ‘Overlord’". In an earlier letter (dated May 26), Stalin remarked that, "we are very encouraged by your grasp on the preparations for the ensuing ‘Overlord’." [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. See Documents no. \_\_\_\_\_. See: British Prime Minister Winston Churchill’s message to the USSR People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, V.M. Molotov, dated 2 May 1944 (CHAR 20/164/30).

   . [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Eden had a similar position earlier. See: W.P. (43) 438, Memo by Eden, 05/10/1943 // TNA, CAB 66/41. In contrast to the historical arguments about the Poland’s possession Lvov, while in Tehran Stalin still predisposed to the ethnic factor: the city was in a region dominated by the Ukrainian population (FRUS The Conferences at Cairo and Tehran, 1943. p. 599-601.). Later, in August 1944, during a meeting with Mikołajczyk in Moscow, Stalin advanced the same argument (Sovetskiy faktor v Vostochnoy Evrope. T. 1. p. 73). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Quisling, Vidkun (1887 – 1945) – Norwegian politician, Minister-President of occupied Norway (1942–1945). The name Quisling has become synonymous with collaborationist andcollaborationists in Nazi Germany controlled governments. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Piłsudski, Józef Klemens (1867 – 1935) – Polish Marshal and statesman, Chief of State (1918–1922), author of coup d’état (1926) and de facto leader of so-called Sanation regime (1926 – 1935), Prime-Minister of Poland (1926 – 1928, 1930). [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Beck, Józef (1894 – 1944) – Polish Colonel and diplomat, Vice Prime-Minister (1930–1932), Minister of Foreign Affairs (1932–1939). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Krajowa Rada Narodowa (KRN - State National Council) - Polish representative body set up on the night of 1 January 1, 1944 in Warsaw, mainly by left-wing and pro-Soviet Polish political forces (Polish Workers' Party, the People's Guard, etc.). Its Chairman was Bolesław Bierut. Talks between representatives of the KRN and the, Polish Communists and Stalin took place in in Moscow in the second half of May 1944, with "the Soviet side, expressing its willingness to recognize the KRN, as the Soviet government will never recognize the Polish government in its present form". There." A caveat was a warningvoiced, though that, "there could be big difficulties with the Allies," and willwhether it would be necessary to come to an agreement with Mikołajczyk and all lyudovtsy" (representatives of Polish peasant parties - Ed.)... (Pol’sha v XX veke. Ocherki politicheskoy istorii / Otv. red. А.F. Noskova. M., 2012. p. 391–392). [↑](#footnote-ref-10)