Letter from British Ambassador to the USSR A. Kerr to Mr. Molotov, 15 August 1944

URGENT AND STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL.

Translation from English.

Dear Mr. Molotov,

After the American Ambassador and I talked to Mr. Vyshinsky this afternoon about the supplying of Polish armed forces fighting in Warsaw, I received a telegram from Mr. Eden in which he reports that the Prime Minister and he are following this matter.

2. Mr. Eden explained that the night before yesterday the authorities of Allied air forces have sent 28 airplanes from Bari and have dropped cargoes in Warsaw, their safe reception was confirmed by the Polish commander with gratitude. One more operation must have been carried out last night. More operations are planned in the future. However, as you can imagine, these flights from the Mediterranean theatre may only be conducted with the support of Allied landings in the south of France. Due to the big distance the airplanes need to cover returning to base in Italy, the amount of assistance which may be rendered to Poles in Warsaw is inevitably small in comparison with the efforts[[1]](#footnote-1).

3. If the airplanes of American 8th Air Corps after performing their task would land at Soviet bases, they could drop a more significant amount of cargoes, and Mr. Eden explains that the Government of Her Majesty really hopes that operations conducted by American air forces are facilitated in every possible way.

4. As I mentioned, I received Mr. Eden’s telegram after I met with Mr. Vyshinsky this afternoon. It was sent before Mr. Eden learned that the Soviet Government does not want American airplanes to land in Soviet bases after delivery of cargoes to Warsaw, and it seems to me that it strongly strengthens the arguments which I used on my own initiative in conversation with Mr. Vyshinsky.

Sincerely yours, Archibald Clark KERR.[[2]](#footnote-2)

[FPARF, f. 06, inv. 6, fold. 30, file 352, pp. 11]

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1. The British Air Force also suffered considerable losses. According to one authoritative assessments, they amounted to 41 of 306 aircraft that flew these missions (13.3%), which would exceed the average loss when air raids were conducted over Germany (Davies N. Rising '44: The Battle for Warsaw London, 2003. p.381). In August 1944, in a conversation with Soviet troops, the crew of one of the wrecked aircrafts that flew over Poland (part of the crew landed on the territory under Red Army control), asserted that pilots from the UK and the Commonwealth countries were wary of missions to Poland. "Austin calls this operation "suicidal", and other members of the crew confirmed this assessment ... Van Eissen, as does Austin, believes that "something is wrong" with these flights to Warsaw, since these operations have led to large losses. At the same time, they are unlikely to have significant support from the Polish partisans. Perhaps, the London Polish government made some kind of mistake or, maybe it deliberately gave inaccurate information to Churchill" (Russkiy arkhiv: Velikaya Otechestvennaya. T. 14 (3-1). p. 234–235.). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Handwritten comment written on the document: “It is necessary to reply the way Comrade Vyshinsky replied to Harriman today. V. Molotov. 16.08. - Executed on 17.08”. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)