From the diary of the USSR Ambassador to Great Britain F.T. Gusev, 20 August 1944.

SECRET

RECORD OF CONVERSATION WITH EDEN

On the 18th of August at 17:45 o'clock Eden called me to the Foreign Office and declared that on this day the War Cabinet held a meeting, where among other issues, the Polish question was discussed, in particular, the situation in Warsaw; and the War Cabinet instructed Eden to talk with me[[1]](#footnote-1). Eden declared that he is greatly concerned by the present situation in Warsaw and especially by the consequences which may influence British-Soviet relations. Eden then specified that the Soviet government did not want to help Poles fighting in Warsaw and denied the request of the American Ambassador Harriman in Moscow to let American airplanes that would deliver arms to Warsaw to land on Soviet territory. […] I told Eden that in the last message from Marshal Stalin to the Prime Minister from 16 August, there is an explanation of why the Soviet command cannot undertake any responsibility for the Warsaw adventure[[2]](#footnote-2). Eden replied that he does not remember this message containing an explanation and asked the secretary to give him a copy of Comrade Stalin’s message. Eden studied the message and again declared that if the Soviet command does not want to undertake responsibility, it could let American airplanes land on the Soviet territory. I specified again that the Soviet command cannot bear any responsibility for everything that Poles did in Warsaw. I read to Eden the second paragraph of Comrade Stalin’s message where it refers to the awful reckless adventure. I then specified to Eden that the British press incorrectly informs public opinion on the state of affairs in Warsaw and several days ago TASS was given the task of clarifying the actual state of affairs. Then Eden, once again, started talking about how the Poles are fighting in Warsaw and that he receives daily telegrams from the British officer Ward[[3]](#footnote-3). Eden said that he prepared a note with copies of the Officer Ward’s telegrams from the period of 2nd till the 16th of August. Eden gave me a note on three pages and said that he would like me to assist in helping Poles fighting in Warsaw. I told Eden that I cannot assist in this business, since the position of the Soviet command is absolutely clear. All I can do is report to the Soviet government about conversation with Eden. Further Eden started saying again that it will be rather difficult to explain the defeat of Warsaw to the public opinion. To my question - whether Eden really thinks that the issue is the struggle for Warsaw - he called an official and asked how many Poles participating in the struggle against Germans in Warsaw. After the telephone conversation Eden said that according to the Polish government, forty thousand Poles are fighting against Germans in Warsaw. I remarked that this information is obviously an exaggeration and that the note which Eden gave me produces an impression of a small group of Poles struggling in Warsaw.

During the conversation Eden behaved nervously and spoke with exasperation. At the end of the conversation, Eden said that Deputy Prime Minister Attlee[[4]](#footnote-4) is very interested in this issue and asked whether I wish to talk with Attlee. I remarked that if the Deputy Prime Minister wishes to talk to me, I can visit him, but on the issue of Poland I won’t be able to add anything to what I’ve said to Eden. Eden considered this and said that, apparently, Attlee shouldn’t talk to me.

[…]

THE AMBASSADOR OF THE USSR IN GREAT BRITAIN [signature] (F. Gusev)

[FPARF, f. 069, inv. 28, fold. 86, file 11, pp. 86–88]

Keywords: Poland

1. This was in reference to a Cabinet meeting held on the very same day at 17 o'clock. There, Eden suggested that, "when he saw M. Gusev later this afternoon to do all he could to influence him in the right direction,” he would give him copies of certain S.O.E. messages which he had from R.A.F. personnel in Warsaw which brought out that there had been a good deal of genuine fighting and that Polish morale was good and standing up well to the situation, and would tell the Ambassador, if it seemed likely to be of value, that the Deputy Prime Minister would be prepared to receive him. The Cabinet approved Eden’s proposal (W.M. (44) 108th Conclusion, Conf. Annex, 18/08/1944 // TNA, CAB 65/47). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Stalin, characterized the uprising as a "terrible adventure", saying: "This would not have been, had the Soviet command been informed before the start of the Warsaw action and had the Poles maintained contact with them". [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Ward, John (1918 - 1995) - British officer, Flight-Lieutenant of RAF, in 1940, was captured by the Germans; while in Poland he managed to escape and establish links with the Polish Resistance. Between 1941 and 1945 he was practically a liaison between the British government and the Home Army. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Attlee, Clement Richard (1883 – 1967) – British statesman and politician, Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs (1942 – 1943), Deputy Prime-Minister (1942 – 1945), Lord President of the Council (1943 – 1945), Prime-Minister (1945 – 1951). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)