Note from the Soviet ambassador to the United Kingdom, F.T. Gusev, to the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR, V.M. Molotov, undated [End of January 1945]

TOP SECRET

TO THE PEOPLE’S COMMISSAR OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Comrade V. M. MOLOTOV.

I send you a list of issues which may be raised by the British or mentioned at the meeting between the heads of the three Governments or in conversations between the Secretaries for Foreign Affairs. It may be assumed that the English will raise the listed issues in the following order.

[signature] F. Gusev

LIST of issues which may be raised by the British or mentioned at the meeting of the heads of three Governments, or in conversations between the Foreign Affairs Ministers.

I. On the policy of the three Governments on the liberated territories of the European allied countries.

1. Poland.

The English may suggest expanding the base of the Provisional Government of Poland by attracting emigrant elements, in accordance with the Yugoslav example – the Tito-Šubašić Agreement[[1]](#footnote-1). It is not possible to rule out that the English may put forward a proposal for a declaration by the three Governments to guarantee Poland’s freedom and independence. There may be an exchange of opinions regarding the borders of Poland.

 2. Greece.

The English will try to explain their policy in Greece and thus to get the governments of the USSR and the USA involved in the discussion in order to gain consent in this or that form, or at least to create the appearance of consent between the three countries on the Greek issue[[2]](#footnote-2).

3. Belgium.

Explanations similar to those on the Greek issue may be given about events in Belgium[[3]](#footnote-3). British will strive for justification of their policy of support and consolidation of reactionary systems in Belgium and Greece.

4. Yugoslavia.

Issue on carrying out of the Tito-Šubašić Agreement. Relations between Yugoslavia and Bulgaria and Greece. Yugoslavia’s territorial claims.

II. On the policy of the three governments on the liberated territories of the former enemy countries of Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary and Finland. Issues regarding the implementation of conditions of the armistice with the mentioned countries:

1. On maintaining and ensuring direct pecuniary British interests;
2. A combination of fulfilling reparations with possible exports from the named countries to Great Britain;
3. Practical aspect of British representatives’ participation in ACC - Allied Control Commission.

III. Eden's suggestion on organizing regular meetings (quarterly, in turns in the three capitals) between the three Secretaries [sic] for Foreign Affairs, as means to improve the mechanism of mutual consultation on current political problems. (The suggestion was made by Eden during our conversation on the 15th of January).

In this case, the British follow their usual practice. If under existing bodies they do not get what they want, they usually suggest re-organisation or the creation of new bodies. We should not support the suggestion on organizing special meetings between the three Secretaries. We should strive for the revitalization of existing bodies (diplomatic, EAC [European Advisory Commission], Council on Italy, ACC [Allied Control Commissions] in Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary and Finland). Meetings between three Secretaries are not ruled out, but they will not be a standing body or a special institute.

IV. Germany.

1. Exchange of views on the state of progress of Allied forces in the struggle against Hitler’s Germany and discussions on the plan of ending the war with Germany. We should demand from the allies their plans of military operations against Germany.

2. Exchange of views regarding the documents elaborated by the EAC (European Advisory Commission) on Germany in light of the outcomes and experiences in the struggle against Germany. Confirmation of the principle of unconditional surrender of Germany. Perhaps, the time has come to publish the documents on the Unconditional Surrender of Germany[[4]](#footnote-4)?

3. The problem of the dismemberment and the future political order in Germany.

4. Issues related to the implementation of the military occupation regime and Allied control in Germany after its surrender, and in this connection - the future work of EAC.

5. The French participation in the occupation of Germany and in the Allies’ control mechanism. French territorial claims on Germany.

6. The Participation of the allied countries in the occupation of Germany. If an arrangement is achieved on the participation of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Belgium and Holland, Britain will then put forward a proposal for the participation of the dominions in the occupation of Germany.

7. The issue of reparations. For the English, this problem is linked to the issue of preserving the capitalist system and preventing possible economic chaos and political consequences.

V. The International Security Organization.

1. The question of membership in the organization and, in particular, the membership of Soviet republics[[5]](#footnote-5).

2. On voting in the Council.

3. On the rights of small countries in the International Security Organization.

4. Britain will not raise the issue of territories mandated at the League of Nations, but it should be discussed.

5. On the role of the International Security Organisation.

6. On the procedure for further discussions with other countries involved in the International Security Organisation project.

VI. On the Middle East countries.

1. Turkey. Straits - We are interested.

2. Iran. Oil concessions[[6]](#footnote-6). Britain will be interested to mention this issue.

VII. On the Far East countries.

1. Japan. Under the current situation of war against Germany, the Americans and the English seem to be no longer interested in our entry into the war against Japan.

Our interests: to cancel the Treaty of Portsmouth[[7]](#footnote-7) and to ensure strategic positions in the Far East.

2. China. Exchange of opinions on China’s situation is possible.

VIII. On persistent struggle against the various types of militant fascism and on relations of the three countries with the so-called neutral countries (Spain, Argentina, Portugal).

We are interested in discussion of this issue.

IX. Exchange of opinions on the prospects for post-war economic cooperation and trade.

In connection with our negotiations with the USA about long-term credit, Eden may raise the issue on the prospects of British-Soviet trade.

X. We are interested in the resolution of the following practical issues:

1. Britain’s recognition of the Baltic republics joining the USSR and the resolution of corresponding economic issues (gold, vessels and other assets of Baltic republics located in Britain).

2. Britain’s recognition of Western Ukraine and Western Belarus, Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina joining the USSR.

3. Britain’s recognition of the freed civilian status of former prisoners of war and civilians liberated by Allied armies.

[signature] Gusev

[FPARF, f. 06, inv. 7a, fold. 57, file 5, pp. 23–28]

Keywords: post-war order, Poland, Greece, Yugoslavia, inter-allied relations, post-war Germany, Turkey, Iran

1. A similar point of view would be more typical of the Soviet position than the British one. In April 1945, at a meeting with H. Truman, Molotov questioned ‘why it is not possible to take the Yugoslav precedent as a basis for the resolution of the Polish question’. Truman, however, regarded a similar scenario to be ‘a violation of the Crimea decision’. Cited in: Roberts G. Sexing up the Cold War: New Evidence on the Molotov-Truman Talks of April 1945 // Cold War History. 2004. Vol. 4. No. 3. P. 120. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. From December 1944, in Athens and in several other parts of Greece, bloody fighting continued between the forces of the left-wing Greek People’s Liberation Army (ELAS) on the one side, and the monarchist National Republican Greek League (EDES) and the British Army on the other. Churchill, having personally visited Athens on 25 December, endeavored to combine the military defeat of ELAS with a political solution which conformed with British interests. At the end of December, Churchill, together with Eden, brought substantial force to bear in persuading King George II of Greece to appoint Archbishop Damaskinos as regent. Damaskinos was appointed on 31 December and enjoyed a reputation as a conciliator. The hope was that this would defuse the situation in Greece somewhat and provide additional support for the British (see: W.P. (44) 740, Note by Bridges, 15/12/1944 // TNA, CAB 66/59). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Gusev appears to have had in mind the appointment of Prince Charles, Count of Flanders, as Regent of Belgium in September 1945. He was called to rule the country pending the return of King Leopold III (something that only happened in 1950). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The instrument entitled ‘Unconditional Surrender of Germany’ (composed of 14 articles) was agreed at a meeting of the EAC on 25 July 1944, before being approved by the Governments of the USA, USSR and Great Britain between August and September 1944. For text see: FRUS. 1944. Vol. 1. Washington, 1966. P. 256–261. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The suggestion that the 16 Soviet Republics be included as founder members of the UN was tabled by Gromyko during the conference at Dumbarton Oaks; it was not, however, accepted by the other Allied nations. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. The year 1944 marked a significant increase in Soviet interest in acquiring oil concessions from Iran. From 10 September through to 25 October there was a Soviet government commission in Iran led by the Deputy People’s Commissar for Foreign Affairs S. I. Kavtaradze, holding a series of meetings with the Shah and the Prime Minister of Iran. The mission did not meet with any success. On 2 December 1944, the Majlis passed a special law prohibiting the head of state from conducting any discussions in relation to the granting of concessions. The failure was ascribed by the Soviet delegates to British influence over the Iranian Government, the Majlis and the Shah. For more detail see: Jamil Hasanli. At The Dawn of the Cold War. The Soviet-American Crisis over Iranian Azerbaijan, 1941-1946. Rowman & Littlefield: Lanham, 2006, Ch.3. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. It was signed on 23 August (5 September) 1905, bringing the Russo-Japanese War of 1904 – 1905 to a close. According to the agreement, the Russian Empire ceded the Liaodong peninsula, including Port Arthur, and the southern half of Sakhalin to Japan, and it had to accept a range of other onerous conditions. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)