Telegram from the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs A. Eden to the Foreign Office, London, describing Soviet and US responses to plans for a provisional government in Warsaw, 8 February 1945

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For Foreign Office from Foreign Secretary

After the first discussion on the 6th February, President Roosevelt wrote a letter, which was discussed with us first[[1]](#footnote-1), to Marshal Stalin setting out rather more clearly than he had done at the meeting the reasons why he felt it urgent that the present differences between the great Allies over Poland should be reconciled. He made it clear that the United States Government could not recognize the Warsaw Provisional Government as now composed. He referred to a suggestion made by Marshal Stalin at the meeting that M. Bierut and M. Morawski[[2]](#footnote-2) should be brought here from Poland and proposed that other representative Poles such as Archbishop Sapieha, M. Witos, M. Zulawski, N. Kutrzeba[[3]](#footnote-3) and Mr. Bujak[[4]](#footnote-4) should be invited here as well to discuss the formation of a Provisional Government (which might also include Poles abroad such as M. Mikolajczyk, M. Romer and M. Grabski) pledged to hold early free elections.[[5]](#footnote-5) The United States Government would then be prepared to examine with the Soviet Government conditions in which they would dissociate themselves from the London Government and transfer their recognition to the new Provisional Government.

At Plenary Meeting on the 7th February Marshal Stalin referred to this letter and stated that he had already tried to establish contact with the Poles in Poland mentioned by the President. He had not so far succeeded and feared that it would not be possible to assemble them here before the Conference ended.[[6]](#footnote-6) He then communicated to the meeting a document setting out the Soviet Government’s proposals. This document made the following points.

1. The Curzon Line with modifications of five to eight kilometres in some regions in favour of Poland to be the Eastern frontier.
2. The Western frontier to follow the Oder (Western) Neisse Line.
3. Some democratic leaders from Polish émigré circles to be added to the Provisional Polish Government.
4. Enlarged Provisional Polish Government to be recognized by Allied Governments.
5. New Government to hold general elections as soon as possible to “organize permanent organs of the Polish Government.”
6. Molotov, Mr. Harriman and Sir A. Clark Kerr to be entrusted with discussing the enlargement of the Provisional Polish Government and to submit their proposals to the consideration of the three Governments.

At Prime Minister’s suggestion Marshal Stalin agreed that point 3 should be modified so as to include also Poles from Poland itself. Americans and ourselves agreed to consider Soviet proposals which seemed to provide a basis for continuing the discussions. In consultation with the Americans we are preparing counter proposals for discussion at today’s meeting.

[TNA, PREM 3/356/3]

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1. Message from Roosevelt on the 6 February. In its compilation, it took account of British amendments that made the text of the resulting message more severe, having sharpened the Allied refusal to recognise the Warsaw Government and having enlarged the list of candidates for inclusion in the new Polish Government as per Mikolajczyk. Churchill also later gave an account to the Cabinet of the process by which the message was compiled. See: Personal from Prime Minister to Deputy Prime Minister for War Cabinet, 08/03/1945 // TNA, PREM 3/51/10. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Needs bio Edward Osóbka-Morawski (1909-1997) - Polish activist and politician in the Polish Socialist Party(PPS) before World War II, First Prime Minister of the Polish People's Republic (1944 – 1947). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Kutrzeba, Stanisław Marian (1876 – 1946) – Polish historian, former rector of Jagiellonian University, president of Polish Academy of Learning, deputy of Krajowa Rada Narodowa (1945 – 1946). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Bujak, Franciszek (1875 – 1953) – Polish historian, professor of Jagiellonian University (1909 – 1918, 1945 – 1953), was active politically in Polish peasant parties: PSL “Piast” and Stronnictwo Ludowe. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The reference here is to Stalin’s suggestion of inviting the Warsaw Poles to Yalta or to Moscow for talks, ‘but only if this attempt will stand any chance of success’. In this, he independently emphasized the reluctance of the Warsaw Poles to see Mikolajczyk, but also, as follows from the American records of the talks, the legitimacy of the Provisional Government: ‘I must say that the Warsaw government has a democratic base equal at least to that of de Gaulle.’ See: Sovetskii Soiuz na mezhdunarodnykh konferentsii perioda Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny 1941 – 1945 gg. Т. 4 (hereafter – Krymskaia konferentsiia). М., 1984. S. 94; FRUS. The Conferences at Malta and Yalta 1945. Washington, 1955. P. 670. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Stalin, referring to the Polish statesmen mentioned in Roosevelt’s message (particularly Witos and Sapieha), claimed that ‘he did not know their addresses and was afraid that the participants of this meeting cannot wait for the arrival of the Poles in Crimea’. (Krymskaia konferentsiia. S. 111). See also: FRUS. The Conferences at Malta and Yalta 1945. P. 711. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)