Telegram from the Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, I.V. Stalin, to the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR, V.M. Molotov, dated 19 April 1945

To Comrade Molotov[[1]](#footnote-1)

1. The tone of the President and Churchill’s joint message[[2]](#footnote-2) was soft, and from its content - no progress. If they try to resolve with you the Polish issue in America, then you can say: although the Moscow Commission in America is almost at full strength, the absence of the representatives of the Polish Provisional Government denies you the possibility to make a decision. If they try to raise the question on the general principles for the solution to the Polish problem, then you can say that these principles are set out Stalin’s letter[[3]](#footnote-3), and that without them being accepted you do not see the possibility of achieving a negotiated solution.

It would be well to tell them that Truman[[4]](#footnote-4) and Churchill’s deviation from the Yugoslavian model makes it impossible to come to concerted solution to the problem.

Churchill sent a message indicating that Mikołajczyk’s announcement[[5]](#footnote-5) makes it possible to come to a favourable resolution to the question of Mikołajczyk. I replied that Mikołajczyk’s statement is a big step forward, but I do not have on hand the text of the statement and, in addition, it is unknown whether Mikołajczyk recognize the Curzon Line. I asked Churchill to send me the full text, as well as clarification from Mikołajczyk that he fully recognizes the Curzon Line. Without Mikołajczyk’s implementation of these terms, I consider it impossible to allow for any concessions.

They are slipping in Stanczyk[[6]](#footnote-6). This is a new character, who cannot be allowed to arouse compassion in us.

2. Proceedings on Berlin are not going badly. We are 35 km from Berlin. Zhukov[[7]](#footnote-7) gradually moves forward, 4-5 km. per day; Konev[[8]](#footnote-8) is moving faster, at 10-12 km. per day[[9]](#footnote-9). Soon Rokossovskiy[[10]](#footnote-10) will link up. I think that in 5-6 days we have to be on the outskirts of Berlin. As for allies, they are as far as can be seen, stuck at the Elbe[[11]](#footnote-11).

Druzhkov”.

[FPARF, f.059, inv.15, folder 74, f.41, p.48-49]

Keywords: inter-allied relations, Poland

1. Written on the text in Vyshinsky’s own hand is: ‘I am passing the text of a telegram addressed to you from Comrade Druzhkov’. Druzhkov is the pseudonym Stalin used in his correspondence with Molotov. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Message dated 15 April (received in Moscow on 18 April). H. Truman and Churchill, in order to prevent collapse and its countless consequences, suggested inviting representatives from Poland and London (including a list of named people) to Moscow in order to form a coalition government, emphasizing that in this they in no way considered the Yugoslav precedent to be applicable to Poland. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Message from Stalin to Roosevelt of 7 April, copied to Churchill. It aimed at the ‘reconstruction’ (but not liquidation) of the Polish Provisional Government with the inclusion in it of a number of Polish figures from London and at progress in the direction of the Yugoslav precedent. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Truman, Harry S. (1884 – 1972) – U.S. statesman and politician, Vice-President (1945) President of USA (1945 – 1953) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The declaration by Mikolajczyk on 15 April expressing the necessity of close and stable friendship with the USSR and a readiness to adhere to the Crimean resolutions was passed by Churchill to Stalin on the very same day. The declaration, composed by Smuts, was made following pressure applied on Mikolajczyk by Churchill and Eden (W.M. (45) 44th Conclusions, Conf. Annex, Minute 3, 13/04/1945 // TNA, CAB 65/52). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Stańczyk, Jan (1886 – 1953) – Polish statesman and politician, Minister of Labour in the Polish Government-in-Exile (1939 – 1944), Minister of Labour in the Polish Provisional Government of National Unity (1945 – 1946). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Zhukov, Georgii Konstantinovich (1896 – 1974) – Soviet military leader, Marshall of the Soviet Union, First Deputy People’s Commissar of Defence and Deputy to the Supreme Commander-in Chief (1942 – 1945), Commander of the First Ukrainian Front (1944), Coordinator of the First and Second Belorussian Fronts (1944), Commander of the First Belorussian Front (1944 – 1945), Commander-in-Chief of the Soviet Military Group in Germany and Head of the Soviet administration (1945 – 1946), Commander-in-Chief of Ground Forces and Deputy Minister of the Armed Forces (1946), Commander of the forces of the Odessa and Urals military districts (1946 – 1953), First Deputy Minister (1953 – 1955), then Minister of Defence of the USSR (1955 – 1957). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Konev, Ivan Stepanovich (1897 – 1973) – Soviet military leader, Marshall of the Soviet Union, Commander of the North-Western (1943), Steppe (1943), Second (1943 – 1944), and First Ukrainian (1944 – 1945) Fronts, Commander-in-Chief of the Central Military Group and Supreme Commissar for Austria (1945 – 1946), Commander-in-Chief of Ground Forces and Deputy Minister of the Armed Forces of the USSR (1946 – 1950), Chief Inspector of the Soviet Army (1950 – 1951), Commander of the Forces of the Carpathian Military District (1951 – 1955), First Deputy Minister of Defence and, simultaneously, Commander-in-Chief of Ground Forces (1955 – 1956). [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. At a meeting with Soviet soldiers on 29 March, Stalin, having recalled Zhukov and Konev to Moscow, decided to introduce an element of competition into the Soviet operation to capture Berlin. As if deliberately, he did not lay down any line demarcating the First Belorussian and First Ukrainian Fronts: whoever would get there first, they could take the German capital. See: Rzheshevskii О.А. Poslednii shturm: Zhukov ili Konev // Mir istorii. 2001. №5. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Rokossovskii, Konstantin Konstantinovich (1896 – 1968) – Soviet military leader, Marshall of the Soviet Union, Commander of the Central (1943), Belorussian (1943 – 1944), First Belorussian (1944), and Second Belorussian (1944 – 1945) Fronts, Commander-in-Chief of the Northern Military Group (1945 – 1949), Minister of National Defence and Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Polish People’s Republic (1949 – 1956). [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. By this time Stalin could already be certain that the capture of Berlin would be left to Soviet forces. On 28 March he had received a telegram from Eisenhower which had not been coordinated with the higher level command – Churchill was left seriously upset by it – suggesting that the Commander-in-Chief of the Anglo-American forces would, in essence, leave the task of capturing Berlin to the Red Army. In the telegram he sent in reply on 1 April, Stalin, not without cunning, answered: ‘Berlin had lost its previous strategic significance. For this reason the Soviet High Command are thinking of deploying non-elite forces in the direction of Berlin.’ See: Rzheshevskii О.А. Poslednii shturm: Zhukov ili Konev. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)