Circular telegram from the People's Commissariat of the USSR on the outcome of the Berlin (Potsdam) Conference between the Heads of Government of the USSR, USA and Great Britain, 4 August 1945[[1]](#footnote-1)

For your bearings and to familiarize yourself, I send you the following additional information on the Berlin Conference.

The decisions reached on the main issues of the Conference’s communiqué were published on 2 August. However, in addition to the communiqué, the heads of the three governments signed a Conference protocol, which is not to be published. What follows below are the details of the decisions that are referred to in the protocol in question, but which are not conveyed or partially conveyed in the communiqué.

1. The German Navy.

It was decided that all of the German surface fleet would be divided equally between the USSR, USA and Great Britain. A large part of Germany’s submarine fleet would be sunk, while 30 of the best submarines would be left intact, to be equally divided between the USSR, USA and Britain for experimental purposes. All German merchant fleet will be equally divided between the USSR, Britain and the USA. The actual transfer of the merchant ships will be carried out after the war against Japan, before the end of which the Anglo-Americans will use the said ships in the war. The US and England have struck off a number of commercial vessels from their own stocks to give to other nations who suffered losses in the war, while the Soviet Union is committing to sharing a portion of its ships with Poland.

2. At the suggestion of the Anglo-Americans, it was decided that reparations would not be imposed on Austria, and that the question of reparations from Italy would be settled by the Council of Foreign Ministers as part of the question of Italy’s peace treaty.

3. Black Sea straits.

It has been decided: a) The Montreux Convention should be revised in order to meet the requirements of modern times; b) This issue will be the subject of direct negotiations between each of the three governments and the Turkish Government.

The Soviet Government’s [position] was not accepted. Instead of the Montreux International Convention, it called for the Soviet Union to be provided with control over Turkey’s Black Sea straits, as well as for the Soviet Union to be provided the opportunity to have its military bases in the Straits.

4. Iran.

It has been decided: a) to immediately withdraw Allied forces from Tehran; b) to decide the question of the further withdrawal of troops from Iran at the Council of Foreign Ministers Affairs in September 1945.

5. A decision was made to establish two commissions, one Anglo-Soviet and one US-Soviet, in order to examine the question of seizing oil extraction equipment that was captured by the Germans in Romania, which, in the opinion of the British and American governments, was the property of the Anglo-American firms.

6. The international zone of Tangier.

In accordance with our proposal, it was decided: a) The zone of Tangier, in view of its strategic importance, shall remain international[[2]](#footnote-2); b) the question of Tangiers to be discussed at the meeting in Paris between government representatives of the US, UK and France.

7. The Soviet government accepted the proposal of the British and US governments to take part in the London Conference on the intra-European transportation[[3]](#footnote-3), which will resume its work.

8. Our proposal on the trust territories not only touched on the Italian colonies, but also on the mandates of the League of Nations. As you know from the published communiqué, the decision of the Conference was only on the question of the Italian colonies.

9. Our proposal on the issue of war criminals – to specify at the conference the names of some of the major war criminals – i.e. Goering[[4]](#footnote-4), Hess[[5]](#footnote-5), Ribbentrop[[6]](#footnote-6), etc.) - was not adopted.

10. In principal, the following US proposal was adopted: with collection of reparations and spoils of war from the satellite countries, the property of the Allied countries is not to be affected. The wording of this corresponding decision was entrusted to be coordinated through standard diplomacy.

11. The Americans have made a proposal to establish international control over such European inland waterways, as the Danube River Rhine, and the Kola channel. At our suggestion, this mattered was passed over to the Council of Foreign Ministers.

In addition, the Conference exchanged views on a number of issues that are not reflected in the communiqué or the Conference’s protocol. So, the British and Americans persistently put forward the proposition of have the upcoming parliamentary elections in Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary and Greece placed under the control of the Allied commission. We rejected this proposal as being incompatible with the principles of democracy.

The British and the Americans pointed out that in Yugoslavia the Tito-Šubašić agreement will not be enforced, which they offered to point out on behalf of the Conference. Rejecting such a statement, we proposed to discuss this issue by summoning Tito and Šubašić, but no agreement was reached.

Likewise, we made a proposal on the Greek government, pointing out its anti-democratic and aggressive character and demanding its reorganization in a democratic spirit on the basis of the agreement with the Greeks made in Varkiza in February [[7]](#footnote-7). At the request of the British, we did not insist on making a decision on the matter.

On our initiative, the sides exchanged opinions on the situation in Syria and Lebanon, but no decisions were taken.

We have made a proposal to have the UK, USA, USSR and France establish international control over the Ruhr industrial area, but having received assurances from the Anglo-Americans that the Ruhr would remain part of Germany and would be under the control of the Inter-Allied Control Council, we did not persist to have specific solutions about this question.

In addition, we gave several memorandums to the British and the Americans: a) on discovering in Norway four hundred thousand German troops that were not fully disarmed; b) on the anti-Soviet agitation by Russian fascists from the ranks of former Nazi agents, who are now among the Soviet prisoners of war and interned in Germany and Austria in the Anglo-Americans zones; c) on the British camp in Italy for Soviet prisoners of war, where instead of one hundred and fifty people, as reported by the British, there turned out to be upon inspection ten thousand Ukrainians, out of which the British formed a division that was headed by officers who served under Hitler; d) on the restrictions imposed on Soviet representatives when visiting Soviet prisoners of war and internees in Anglo-American camps; e) on the allies’ removal of equipment from Soviet-occupied zone of Germany, which Anglo-Americans were temporarily doing, as well as about thirteen thousand wagons stolen by the allies in this region.

The allies promised us that they would verify all these issues and report back the results.

In conclusion, we can say that the Conference ended with satisfactory results for the Soviet Union.

Confirm receipt.

Molotov

[Archive of the President of the Russian Federation - APRF, f.3, inv.63, file 231, pp.154-159]

Keywords: inter-allied relations, Turkey, Greece, post-war Germany, post-war Eastern Europe

1. Sent to all Ambassadors and envoys of the USSR, and also to the Soviet representatives in Bucharest, Sofia, and Budapest, to the People’s Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the Ukrainian SSR D.Z. Manuilꞌsky in Kiev, the People’s Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the Belorussian SSR K.V. Kiselev in Minsk and to the Consulate General of the USSR in Pretoria. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Port Tangier, which controls the southern part of the Gibraltar Strait, had been turned into an international demilitarised zone (on the territory of the French part of the Moroccan Protectorate) in accordance with the Paris convention of 18 December 1923 (initially signed by France, Spain and Great Britain, then later by a number of other European states). The status of the international zone was abolished following the inclusion of Tangier in the independent state of Morocco in 1956. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The conference took place between 24 August and 27 September 1945. Contrary to its initially expressed acceptance, the Soviet side (in the person of the Ambassador, Gusev), citing the absence of instructions, did not take part in the conference. The British representatives, as did the American Ambassador Winant in his report to Washington, regarded this step by the USSR as ‘blackmail on account of Rumania’ (the reluctance of Great Britain and the USA to establish diplomatic relations with Bucharest and readiness to admit the Romanian delegation to the conference as observers only). Poland also abstained from participation in the conference. See: FRUS. 1945. Vol. 2. P. 1409. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Goering, Hermann Wilhelm (1893 – 1946) – Nazi German statesman and politician, de facto second most-powerful person in Nazi Germany and Hitler’s successor, held numerous posts, including Vice-Chancellor (1941 – 1945), President of Reichstag (1932 – 1945), Minister-President of Prussia (1933 – 1945), Minister of Aviation (1933 – 1945). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Hess, Rudolf Walter Richard (1894 – 1987) – Nazi German statesman and politician, deputy head of the Nazi Party (1933 – 1941). In 1941 undertook a flight to Great Britain where he was taken prisoner and sentenced to life imprisonment. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Ribbentrop, Joachim von (1893 – 1946) – Nazi German statesman and politician, Minister for Foreign Affairs (1938 – 1945). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. The Agreement was concluded on 12 February 1945 in Varkiza, near Athens between the Greek Government and representatives from ELAS. It provided for a ceasefire, a general election and a referendum to decide the political future of the country and the question of the monarchy. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)