Note from the Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR, I.M. Maisky, to the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR, V.M. Molotov, dated 29 November 1945[[1]](#footnote-1)

Secret.

# 29 November 1945

TO THE PEOPLE’S COMMISSAR FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE USSR

Comrade V.M. MOLOTOV

Dear Vyacheslav Mikhailovich,

Having contemplated in more detail the issue of the future Conference of the Three Ministers, I think that it would be desirable for us to introduce the following issues on this agenda:

1. Peace treaties with Finland, Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary and Italy. It would be advisable to conduct the negotiations regarding these treaties so that the Americans and the English would acknowledge the Balkans (except Greece) and Eastern Europe as the Soviet “security zone”, in which they do not conduct any significant political or economic activity (if you remember, such a “safety zone” in the East had been discussed at a meeting called by you prior to Churchill’s and Eden’s arrival to Moscow in October 1944).
2. Setting up the Control Council in Japan, unless this issue has been resolved before the Conference.
3. Fulfilling the resolutions of the Potsdam Conference, namely:

a) Germany’s military potential

The resolutions of the Potsdam Conference on this issue are sufficiently well defined and give us a good base from which to attack English and American attempts to preserve large metallurgy, chemistry, etc. in the Western zone. In the worst case such pressure from our side will force the Anglo-Americans to somewhat moderate their appetite in this sphere.

b) Reparations

It seems that the reparations issue is in such a status that it is impossible to resolve it within the framework of the Inter-Allied Reparations Commission[[2]](#footnote-2). To this end a decision on a higher level, that is that of a Conference of the three Ministers, is required. Furthermore, the reparations issue is closely linked to the issue of the military potential liquidation.

c) Future of the Ruhr

In spite of the position taken by the English and the Americans on our proposal to internationalise the Ruhr with the USSR participating in its controlling, it might now be worthwhile to renew this proposal. In the preliminary negotiations with Alphand[[3]](#footnote-3) we should probe France’s position and exercise a certain pressure on them. If the French were to propose that the Ruhr be controlled by France, Holland, Great Britain, Italy, Switzerland and Luxembourg (see note from Comrade Litvinov No. 122/ml dated 28 November 1945[[4]](#footnote-4)), they would find it difficult to object to the Soviet Union’s participation in such control.

Should the French agree to the Ruhr’s internationalisation with our participation, Britain and the US’s current position on this issue would be significantly weakened, and the chances for signing a treaty on this issue at the Conference of the Three Ministers would become significantly higher.

However, if we do not succeed in our negotiations with the French on our proposal, we could make the proposals as outlined by Comrade Litvinov in his note, that is either to exclude all of the Rhine – Westphalia region from the jurisdiction of the planned German central commissariats and to set up a local authority there with the participation of the USSR, or at least to stipulate that “the Potsdam resolutions regarding central government mechanisms do not predetermine the issue of Germany’s western borders”. In the negotiations on the Ruhr, we should let our partners understand that the resolution of this issue to our satisfaction could mitigate our claims regarding the German military potential.

d) Central commissariats

On the issue of central commissariats, we would need, while keeping to the basis of the Potsdam resolutions, to reach out to the French as much as possible, since in the current international situation and given the existing French Government[[5]](#footnote-5) we would be better off using France against England and the USA.

e) Spain

While checking the fulfillment of the Potsdam resolutions we could touch upon the issue of Franco and again exercise pressure on the English and the Americans, repeating our demand that the US, England and France severe their diplomatic relations with him. The English and the Americans will hardly agree to such a break, but they might recall their ambassadors from there (the Americans may have done it already) and leave some insignificant chargés d’affaires instead, thus making a gesture against Franco.

This gesture will of course be reflected in the global press and the political effect will thus be increased. Furthermore, such action would strengthen the position of the Spanish left republicans headed by Negrin[[6]](#footnote-6). In any case, our raising the Spanish issue at the Conference would once again demonstrate to the Anglo-Americans that we retain our interest towards it, which would come useful.

1. Assembly

It would be advisable to try to work out with the Anglo-Americans some common line at the January session of the Assembly[[7]](#footnote-7). It would be desirable for us to avoid conflicts at this Assembly between us, on the one side, and the Anglo-Americans, on the other side. Namely:

a) Composition of the United Nations governing bodies

Unless this issue is to be decided at the Preliminary Commission meeting in London, it would be good to agree with the Anglo-Americans on the candidature of the future General Secretary[[8]](#footnote-8), future composition of the Security Council, and other more important bodies of the United Nations.

b) Nuclear power

It would be advisable (since it depends on us) to discuss nuclear power not as a stand-alone issue, but in conjunction with the Assembly, so as not to show our special interest in or our special concern about this issue. We could grant our consent to participate in the planned Anglo-American discussions of this issue in the framework of the United Nations, but it would be better if it is transferred to the Security Council, and not to some special Commission.[[9]](#footnote-9)

1. Conference of the three Ministers.

In order to support the Big Three it would be desirable at the Conference of the Three Ministers to once again confirm that such Conferences take place in accordance with the Crimean resolutions and will be continued thereupon, without any limitation on the term of this institute.

[signature] I. Maisky

[FPARF, f. 0430, inv. 2, fold. 4, file 1, pp. 14–18]

Keywords: post-war order, inter-allied relations, post-war Germany, post-war Western Europe, United Nations, the Balkans, post-war Eastern Europe

1. At the top of the page there is a handwritten inscription: ‘From Comrade Maisky’. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The experience of the first unsuccessful session of the Inter-Allied Reparations Commission (formed in accordance with a resolution of the Crimean conference), which had taken place in Moscow between 21 June and 13 July 1945, showed that reaching agreement within the framework of the commission – even on fundamental issues like the total amount of reparations, the Soviet share, etc. – would be problematic. See: Zhigalov B.S. I.М. Maiskii i problema germanskikh reparatsii (1943 – 1945 гг.) // Vestnik Tomskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta. 2014. №1. S. 60–61. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Alphand, Hervé (1907 – 1994) – French diplomat. head of the Economic Department of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1944 – 1949), French representative to NATO (1952 – 1954). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. See: SSSR, Frantsiia i obꞌedinenie Evropy (1945 – 1957) / Otv. red. М.М. Narinskii. М., 2008. S. 45. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Refers to the Provisional Government headed by de Gaulle, which had defended an extremely hardline anti-German programme at this time (a number of territories separated from Germany, internationalisation of the Ruhr, etc.). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Negrín, Juan (1892 – 1956) – Spanish statesman and politician (Spanish Socialist Workers’ Party), former Prime-Minister of Spain (1937 – 1939), then in exile. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Refers to the first session of the General Assembly of the UN, which took place 10 January – 14 February 1946. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Between October 1945 and February 1946, the responsibilities of the General Secretary were discharged by the British diplomat G. Jebb. In February 1946 the former Foreign Minister of Norway T. Lie was elected to be the first Secretary General; he held the post until November 1952. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Maisky’s ideas were a reaction to the outcome of a meeting of the representatives of the USA, Great Britain and Canada that took place in Washington on 11 – 15 November. At this meeting a tripartite collective declaration on atomic energy was signed, envisaging the creation of a special international commission for atomic energy under the aegis of the UN. The document simultaneously rejected the idea of disseminating information on the practical applications of atomic energy, and pushed the task of halting production and destroying atomic weapons far into the future. This caused the negative reaction of the USSR. For more detail on this see: Wevill R. Britain and America after World War II: Bilateral Relations and the Beginnings of the Cold War. London, 2012. The British military mission in an account from October 1945 correctly second-guessed the Soviet position on the nuclear issue: ‘Their policy as regards the bomb itself is likely to be to press for handing over the weapon to the Security Council, well knowing that their right of veto would protect them against the danger of its use against themselves’ (C.O.S. (45) 565 (O), Report by COS, 06/09/1945 // TNA, CAB 80/97). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)