Extract from a brief, together with summary of observations by various Soviet officials on draft treaties for the disarmament of Germany and Japan that was presented by the Secretary of State of the United States, J.F. Byrnes, 8 June 1946[[1]](#footnote-1)

(Compiled by Comrades Novikov and Zarubin[[2]](#footnote-2) – Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR)

I. DRAFT TREATY FOR THE DISARMAMENT AND DEMILITARISATION OF GERMANY

[…]

it can be concluded that, in proposing to sign this treaty, the American Government are pursuing the following aims[[3]](#footnote-3):

1. To shorten the length of the occupation of Germany.

2. To undermine the Soviet Union’s receipt of reparations from Germany.

3. To weaken control over Germany.

4. To weaken the influence of the Soviet Union over issues relating to Germany and other European countries.

5. To substitute the task of actual military and economic disarmament of Germany with its opposite – the preservation of Germany as a strong power.

6. To accelerate the re-emergence of Germany so as to use her against the Soviet Union.

7. To revise all the jointly adopted Allied resolutions on Germany.

Below are the following individual comrades’ statements on each of these aims:

1. To shorten the length of the occupation of Germany

а) The treaty for the disarmament and demilitarisation of Germany has been planned to reduce the occupation of Germany (Comrade Andreev А.А.[[4]](#footnote-4)).

b) The Soviet occupation democratises not only a part of Germany, but to a significant degree weakens the reactionary forces in her other parts as well; for this reason the Americans and the British are trying to speed up the end of their occupations (Comrade Kalinin M.I.[[5]](#footnote-5)).

(c) Byrnes’s proposal essentially leads to the shortening of the occupation, the aims of which are actual disarmament and the liquidation of any industry that can be used for war (Comrade Kaganovich L.М.[[6]](#footnote-6)).

(d) From the draft treaty one can draw the conclusion that the period of occupation does not have to be protracted and that the Americans plan to accelerate the creation of a German central government so as to later substitute the current system of occupation for the creation of some kind of Control Commission (Comrade Dekanozov V.G.).

(e) The draft treaty leaves the question of the duration of the Allied occupation of German territory open, leaving a loophole for cutting it down (Comrade Dekanozov V.G.).

(f) Article III is particularly indicative, where it says that ‘the adoption by Germany of Articles I and II will be a necessary condition for the the curtailing of the Allied occupation.’ This can also be interpreted to mean that after Germany’s adoption of the two aforementioned Articles, and even before the signing of a peace treaty, the occupation will be curtailed (Comrade Litvinov М.М.[[7]](#footnote-7)).

(g) The basic aim of the draft treaty proposed by Byrnes is ending occupation of Germany as quickly as possible (Comrade Novikov К.V.).

(h) The Americans want to end the occupation of Germany as quickly as possible and to remove the armed forces of the USSR from Germany, and then to raise the question of the withdrawal of our troops from Poland, and in the future from the Balkans as well (Comrade Zhukov G.К.).

(i) In Article III it says that Germany’s unconditional acceptance of the terms of Article I and II of the draft will be a necessary condition for the curtailing of the Allied occupation of Germany. This is essentially incorrect. Apart from that, the conditions for curtailing the Allied occupation of Germany are defined in the Crimean declaration on Germany, and there is no other basis on which to re-examine this question (Comrade Vyshinsky А.Ya.).

2. To undermine the Soviet Union’s receipt of reparations from Germany

(а) The American draft treaty has been planned to make receiving reparations from Germany more complicated (Comrade Andreev А.А.).

(b) The draft treaty completely fails to provide for the continuing receipt of reparations from Germany, threatening this vital issue for the USSR (Comrade Dekanozov V.G.).

(c) The aim of the draft treaty is to disrupt the removal of equipment and commodities as reparations from Germany to the Soviet Union (Comrade Zhukov G.К.).

3. To weaken control over Germany

(а) The proposal that all decisions of the Control Commission be taken by majority vote means that control over the implementation of the treaty devolves in practice to the British and American representatives (Comrade Kalinin М.I.).

(b) Byrnes’s draft treaty is directed at weakening control over the disarmament and demilitarisation of Germany (Comrade Shvernik N.М.[[8]](#footnote-8)).

(c) In Byrnes’s draft there is an obvious attempt to substitute the full authority of an Allied Control Council for some kind of Control Commission with undefined functions (Comrade Dekanozov V.G.).

(d) The second basic aim of Byrnes’s draft is to weaken Soviet influence on questions relating to Germany (Comrade Novikov К.V.).

(e) The proposal to set up a four-party inspectorate and to create a Control Commission is unauthoritative in that even the existing Control Council that depends on the occupation authorities has not to date yielded any substantial results, with the exception of the Soviet zone of occupation. But the Commission will fail all the more to drive the matter of German disarmament to its conclusion (Comrade Zhukov G.К.).

4. To weaken the influence of the Soviet Union over issues relating to Germany and other European countries

(а) Byrnes’s draft is calculated to quickly remove us from Germany, and the Americans, apparently, want to run ahead and seem softer to the Germans so as to win Germany onto their side against us (Comrade Andreev А.А.).

(b)The draft treaty is intended to create difficulties in implementing our policies, not only in Germany, but also in the other countries of Europe (Comrade Voroshilov К.Е.[[9]](#footnote-9)).

(c) Byrnes’s statement also pursues the provocative purpose of representing us as hard-hearted and them as soft-hearted “peacemakers” (Comrade Kaganovich L.М.).

(d) With the established practice of forming blocs between the USA, Great Britain and other countries when deciding issues, the Soviet Union will be isolated from control over the disarmament and demilitarisation of Germany (Comrade Shvernik N.М.).

(e) In making their proposal for such a treaty, the USA are, obviously, trying to bind the Soviet Union and place under their own control one or another of our functions on German territory (Comrade Vyshinsky А.Ya.).

(f) The treaty is directed at the weakening of Soviet influence on questions relating to Germany; this flows from the second Article of the draft treaty which envisages the creation of a system of four-party inspection, which is what is understood by the Control Commission. This Control Commission will take decisions by majority vote; that is completely unacceptable for us (Comrade Novikov К.V.).

5. To substitute the task of actual military and economic disarmament of Germany with its opposite – the preservation of Germany as a strong power

(а) The proposed draft excludes the elimination of all German industry that could be used for war production and the transfer of productive capabilities not needed by the peaceful industry of Germany to the Soviet Union and the Allies in settlement of the reparations imposed on Germany (Comrade Shvernik N.М.).

(b) Byrnes’s draft treaty cannot be adopted because in essence it does not provide for the disarmament and demilitarisation of Germany (Comrade Shvernik N.М.).

(c) In the treaty, a number of important resolutions adopted at the Yalta and Berlin conferences are passed over, in particular, measures to decentralise and eliminate excessive concentrations of economic power (Comrade Vyshinsky А. Ya.).

(d) The measures envisaged by the treaty are basically limited to issues of control over disarmament and do not encompass all questions of the annihilation or effective control over German industry and the isolation of all Nazi and militaristic influences from the life of the German people, as it was envisaged in the resolutions of the Crimean conference (Comrade Govorov L.А.[[10]](#footnote-10)).

(e) There are many different specialists in Germany, capable of preparing Germany’s re-emergence as a state and as a military-economic force at the first opportunity when the general regime of control over the country weakens. There are still many industrial enterprises in Germany, which could serve as a basis for the development of new industry. In Germany, the Nazi poison has still not been eradicated from the mind of Germans (Comrade Voronov N.N.[[11]](#footnote-11)).

6. To accelerate the re-emergence of Germany so as to use her against the Soviet Union

(а) With this treaty, reactionary American circles are pursuing the aim of prevention of the completion of the process of uprooting Fascism and militarism in Germany and of accelerating the re-emergence of reactionary Germany as a bulwark of capitalism and an advanced post against the Soviet Union (Comrade Kaganovich L.M.).

(b) The Americans and British, who are afraid of strengthening new developments of anti-fascist and anti-capitalist force, hurry to quickly “normalise” the conditions that will allow for the rebirth of reactionary bourgeois Germany in order to hinder the full uprooting of fascism (Comrade Kaganovich L.М.).

(c) The withdrawal of Soviet and other troops from Germany is beneficial for Britain and the USA for it unties the hands of American and British capitalists and in a private and informal way gives them the chance to strengthen the reactionary elements in all of Germany (Comrade Kalinin М.I.).

(d) In fact, by virtue of the proposed treaty, there will not be disarmament and demilitarisation in Germany, but the opportunity for building up her power will be created (Comrade Shvernik N.М.).

(e) The economic and political unification of Germany under the leadership of the Americans would mean both the military rebirth of Germany, but also after several years a German-British-American war against the Soviet Union (Comrade Lozovsky S.А.).

(f) Byrnes’s draft pursues the aim of the fastest rebirth of German economic might so as to utilise Germany against the Soviet Union (Comrade Novikov К.V.).

(g) Byrnes’s draft does not contain a range of substantial proposals such as: punishing war criminals, destroying the Nazi Party, Nazi laws, etc., the abolition and prevention of future military academies and the banning of military training (Comrade Novikov К.V.).

(h) The true purpose of Byrnes’s draft is the desire to preserve the military potential of Germany as a necessary basis for the future implementation of their aggressive aims (Comrade Zhukov G.К.).

7. To revise all the jointly adopted Allied resolutions on Germany

(а) The treaty on the disarmament and demilitarisation of Germany has been calculated not to enact the Potsdam resolutions, but to substitute them with a new document (Comrade Andreev А.А.).

(b) The American draft has been directed against the Berlin resolutions on Germany (Comrade Voroshilov К.Е.).

(c) Byrnes’s proposed draft in its present form cannot be adopted in so far as it is directed at changing the resolutions of the Berlin conference (Comrade Shvernik N.М.).

(d) The draft treaty is an attempt to turn attention away from the tasks set to the Allies by the Berlin resolutions for the urgent disarmament and demilitarisation of Germany during her occupation, and towards the direction of tasks which can and must arise for the Allies subsequently, after the implementation of the resolutions of the Berlin meeting. The Americans are trying to legalise the non-implementation of the Berlin resolutions on the disarmament and demilitarisation of Germany, under the guise of the demagogic proposal of a twenty-five year agreement on the disarmament and demilitarisation of Germany (Comrade Vyshinsky А. Ya.).

(e) In the treaty a range of important decisions taken at the Yalta and Berlin conferences are being by-passed and, in particular, measures for the decentralisation and the elimination of excessive concentrations of economic power. In some cases, Byrnes’s draft gives less full and less decisive formulations (Comrade Vyshinsky А. Ya.).

(f) I consider Byrnes’s treaty to be an attempt by the USA to revise fundamental resolutions on Germany that have already been agreed and adopted by the three Allied powers; this includes the issue of disarmament. This is, in essence, an attempt to hide the fact of failure and non-implementation of one of the fundamental obligations taken on themselves by the British and Americans, namely the obligations in respect of the disarmament and demilitarisation of Germany, and to depict this matter as if it is only in this treaty that the Allies are taking upon themselves the obligations to disarm Germany when these obligations were taken on by them a year or so ago. (Comrade Dekanozov V.G.).

(g) Under the guise of the concretisation and clarification of adopted and previously agreed resolutions, in fact an attempt is being made to retreat from the economic and political principles for the treatment of Germany that were adopted and agreed by the three powers (Comrade Dekanozov V.G.).

(h) Byrnes’s draft stands in clear contradiction with the resolutions of the Crimean conference, which were affirmed at the Berlin conference, in respect of the occupation of Germany and control over her (Comrade Novikov К.V.).

(i) The treaty proceeds from the thesis that, to a substantial degree, the disarmament and demilitarisation envisaged by the resolutions of the Berlin conference have been fulfilled; that does not correspond with reality (Comrade Govorov L.А.).

(j) The proposed draft treaty does not introduce anything substantially new for the implementation by the Allies of the obligations they have taken upon themselves (Comrade Voronov N.N.).

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[FPARF, f. 06, inv. 8, fold. 60, file 1010, pp. 1–11]

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1. It was sent to Stalin as an addendum to Molotov’s note of 8 June 1946. The document is interesting in that it summarises the results of the collective discussion of major foreign policy issues – something rare in Soviet practice at that time – and in that it reflects the very broad spectrum of views of the participants. Published in: SSSR i germanskii vopros. 1941 – 1949. Dokumenty iz Arkhiva vneshnei politiki Rossiiskoi Federatsii. Т. 2. М., 2000. S. 574–582. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Zarubin, Georgii Nikolaevich (1900 – 1958) – Soviet diplomat. In charge of the Countries of the Americas Section at the People’s Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the USSR (1941 – 1944), Ambassador of the USSR to Canada (1944 – 1946), Ambassador of the USSR to Great Britain (1946 – 1952), Ambassador to the USA (1952 – 1958). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The ideas which follow below were partly formed earlier in a note by Litvinov for Stalin from 25 May (see: SSSR i germanskii vopros. Т. 2. S. 517–519). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Andreev, Andrei Andreevich (1895 – 1971) – Soviet statesman and Party figure, Secretary of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) (1924 – 1925, 1935 – 1946), Chairman of the Soviet of the Union of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR (1938 – 1946), People’s Commissar for Agriculture (1943 – 1946), Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR (1946 – 1953). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Kalinin, Mikhail Ivanovich (1875 – 1946) – Soviet statesman and Party figure, Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR (1938 – 1946). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Kaganovich, Lazar Moiseevich (1893 – 1991) – Soviet statesman and Party figure, Deputy, then First Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR (1938 – 1944, 1944 – 1947, 1947 – 1957; before 1946 – Council of People’s Commissars), Minister for Industry and Minister for the Construction Materials Industry (1946 – 1947, 1956 – 1957). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Litvinov, Maksim Maksimovich (1876 – 1951) – Soviet statesman and diplomat. Deputy People’s Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR (1941 – 1946), Ambassador to the USA (1941 – 1943), Envoy to Cuba (1942 – 1943). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Shvernik, Nikolai Mikhailovich (1888 – 1970) – Soviet statesman and Party figure. First Secretary of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions (1930 – 1944),Chairman of the Soviet of Nationalities of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR (1938 – 1946), Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR (1946 – 1953). [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Voroshilov, Kliment Efremovich (1881 – 1969) – Soviet statesman and Party figure, member of the State Defence Committee (1941 – 1944), Chairman of the Allied Control Commission in Hungary (1945 – 1947), Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR (1946 – 1953), Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR (1953 – 1960). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Govorov, Leonid Aleksandrovich (1897 – 1955) – Soviet military leader, Marshal of the Soviet Union, Commander of Forces on the Leningrad Front (1942 – 1945), Commander of Forces of the Leningrad Military District (1945 – 1946), Chief Inspector of Ground Forces (1946 – 1947), Chief Inspector of the Armed Forces – Deputy Minister of the Armed Forces of the USSR (1947 – 1948), Commander of Anti-Aircraft Defence Forces (1948 – 1952), Deputy Minister of Defence of the USSR (1950 – 1953). [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Voronov, Nikolai Nikolaevich (1899 – 1968) – Soviet military leader, Chief Marshal of Artillery, Head of Artillery in the Red Army (1941 – 1945), Commander of Artillery for the Armed Forces of the USSR (1946 – 1950), President of the Artillery Academy (1950 – 1953). [↑](#footnote-ref-11)