

November 5, 1945

**From the Journal of V.M. Molotov, 'The Reception of
US Ambassador Harriman, 5 November 1945 at
1900'**

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Summary:

Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs V. M. Molotov and American Ambassador to the Soviet Union W. Averell Harriman discuss proposed Soviet changes to the control mechanism and Far East Commission in Japan.

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Secret
FROM THE JOURNAL
OF V. M. MOLOTOV

THE RECEPTION OF US AMBASSADOR HARRIMAN
5 November 1945 at 1900

Molotov said that he had invited Harriman today to pass him the changes which the Soviet Government is proposing both on the draft of the Control Mechanism for Japan and on the draft about the Far East Commission. Molotov added that he would pass Harriman the text of these changes in written form in Russian and Harriman could, if he wished, familiarize himself with these changes right now, and Molotov is ready to give explanations about the main questions.

Harriman expressed a desire, although in passing, to familiarize himself with the text right now and read the text. In the process of reading the proposals about the Control Mechanism Harriman paused somewhat when reading the following part of the Soviet reply:

"in order to monitor the observance of the surrender conditions by Japan and to consult and give advice to the Supreme Commander with respect to implementing the surrender and occupation conditions by Japan..."

This change is motivated by the following considerations.

The meaning of the expression "and monitoring of Japan" remains unclear after the inclusion of the word "monitor" in point 1 of the American draft. This ambiguity needs to be eliminated, pointing out that the Allied Control Council (the Allied Control Commission) is created to monitor the observance of the surrender conditions by Japan, as it says in proposed change".

When reading the changes to the draft about the Far East Commission Harriman directed attention to the absence of India in the list of countries taking part in the Far East Commission, and points out that India was already included in the participants of the Far East Commission. Then Harriman asked Molotov whether India was intentionally not included in this list by the Soviet side.

Molotov answered affirmatively and added that now it is no longer a Far East Consultative Commission, but a Far East Commission with other functions, and added that in a conversation with Harriman in Sochi Generalissimo Stalin had already spoken of the point of view of the Soviet Government regarding the non-inclusion of India in the list of countries taking part in the Far East Commission.

Harriman explains that he was asking about this not for discussion, but by way of clarifying the question.

Concerning point 2 of the Soviet reply about the Far East Commission Harriman asked: "Does it mean you are returning to the old draft, so it can be said that this change is completely taken from the old American text? (that is, from the 22 August 1945 American proposals about the Far East Commission).

Molotov answered affirmatively.

By way of clarification Harriman asked, is the second part of point C in section 2 of the US proposal thus excluded about changing the working conditions of the Far East

Commission, which reads:

"The Commission will take the policy already presented by the Government of the United States as mandatory if and until it is changed by the Commission, and will also take the directives which the United States has already sent the Supreme Commander as mandatory if and until the authorities which have given the instructions change such directives in accordance with the recommendations of the Commission".

Molotov answered affirmatively

Harriman said that this is clear to him. After familiarization with change 6 regarding the principle of voting in the Far East Commission Harriman made the remark, "So! What else?" Harriman asked by way of clarification about point 7 of the Soviet reply, does this change mean that the phrase regarding the possibility of convening meetings of the Commission in Tokyo is excluded [?]

Molotov explained that it is provided in the reply of the Soviet Government that Washington is the permanent location of the Far East Commission.

Harriman replies that this is clear for him.

After Harriman finishes reading both documents Molotov asked Harriman's opinion about these changes.

Harriman replied that he could not add anything new to what he had presented in previous conversations. Then he said that he had received a report that his government was disappointed by the fact that it had to submit several changes in its initial proposals about the control mechanism for Japan.

Regarding the changes about the Far East Commission Harriman said that many various wishes and proposals will be expressed about this question and that this question is being discussed in Washington at the present time.

Molotov asked have the British and Chinese expressed their opinions [?]

Harriman clarified, did Molotov have in mind the opinions of the British and Chinese about the Far East Commission [?]

Molotov replied, both about the Far East Commission and the control mechanism.

Harriman replied that he did not know whether the British and Chinese expressed their opinions about the control mechanism.

As regards the proposals about the Far East Commission, then he knew that the US government has received the wishes from them when drawing up the proposals about the working conditions of the Far East Commission and that these wishes were considered, concerning which he, Harriman, has already had the chance to frankly inform Molotov. Harriman said that he also knows that some proposals also came from the delegations invited to Washington, but that he did not know the detailed content of these proposals. Then Harriman said that at the present time the proposals about the Far East Commission are already at the stage of consideration. As regards the question of the control mechanism he did not know whether any statements had been made about this question by the British or Chinese. Then Harriman said that he had completely explained the opinion and position of his government with respect to the proposals about the creation of these two bodies and did not see the necessity of

repeating himself about this question again. He then said that he had no doubt that the US Government could not accept the responsibility for the situation in Japan on the condition that it had to coordinate any question and any of its actions with the Allies. The US government was taking into consideration the special difficulty and danger of the situation in Japan where the Japanese, although behaving well at the present time but, considering their treachery, cases might arise when the Supreme Commander would need to act decisively and quickly, and to do this he has to have the appropriate rights and authority.

Then Harriman explained that he was not speaking by way of discussion but because the US government thinks that the situation in Japan is considerably different from the situation in Germany and the Balkan satellites. In Germany there are four zones of occupation and if there are differences on any questions each High Commissioner in his zone of occupation, proceeds in the best manner in order to solve urgent questions which arise. When these four High Commissioners meet they arrange a common policy. In the Balkans most of the population is friendly, with the exception of some pro-fascist elements. In Japan there's another situation, quite difficult and entirely different, and this requires another policy with respect to the Japanese. As is well-known, the Americans still are suspicious of the Japanese, Harriman stressed in conclusion.

Molotov said that the Soviet Union could help America deal with the Japanese and has no intention at all of interfering in the Americans' activity in Japan.

Harriman stressed that he understands this and that he is confident that agreement can be reached in the solution of contentious questions. However, the Supreme Commander's hands ought not be tied when making decisions on urgent questions. Then, as in previous conversations, he again referred to the fact that the Soviet side had recognized this situation itself when Generalissimo Stalin admitted and agreed that the American Supreme Commander should have the last word.

Molotov said that the Soviet Government, just like Generalissimo Stalin, thinks that MacArthur as a general and Supreme Commander and as Chairman of the Allied Control Commission will have the necessary authority to act. But the fact ought to also be taken into consideration that if the Soviet Government also has to bear a share of responsibility for the situation in Japan then this needs to be taken into consideration and borne in mind when creating a control body for Japan. The Soviet Government, as is clear from the changes it is proposing, has formulated its position in writing and presented a corresponding explanation for these changes. Now [we] can move to practical matters. A written presentation of these changes and explanations for them will make this easier.

Harriman stressed the importance of a specific answer from the Soviet government, but noted that his function did not include the discussion of this question and that his functions were limited to just the presentation of the position of the United States and that he will pass on to his government the changes to the proposals received from Molotov.

The conversation ended with this.

Molotov expressed the hope that Harriman will attend the parade and reception at the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs on 7 November.

Harriman replied that he will attend the reception and in any event will not miss the parade. Then he expressed the hope that British Ambassador Kerr will also be able to arrive in Moscow in time to attend the parade and reception.

The conversation lasted 35 minutes.
Cde. Malik was present at the conversation.

Recorded by Potrubach.

Attachments: Copies of the documents presented to Harriman by Cde. Molotov.

Distributed to:

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