

November 19, 1945

From the Journal of V.M. Molotov, 'The Reception of US Ambassador Harriman, 19 November 1945'

Citation:

"From the Journal of V.M. Molotov, 'The Reception of US Ambassador Harriman, 19 November 1945'", November 19, 1945, Wilson Center Digital Archive, RGASPI, f. 558, op. 11, d. 98, ll. 0160-0163. Contributed by Sergey Radchenko and translated by Gary Goldberg. <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/208933>

Summary:

Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs V. M. Molotov and American Ambassador to the Soviet Union W. Averell Harriman continue their negotiations over the American proposals for the control mechanism and Far East Commission in Japan. Harriman introduces the possibility of Soviet troops taking part in the occupation under American Supreme Commander General MacArthur.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Blavatnik Family Foundation

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

Secret
FROM THE JOURNAL
OF V. M. MOLOTOV

THE RECEPTION OF US AMBASSADOR HARRIMAN
19 November 1945

Harriman said that the US government had considered the questions presented in the recent reply of the Soviet government of 12 November and had entrusted him, Harriman, with passing on the reply of the American government both on the question of the Allied Military Council for Japan as well as on the question of the Far East Commission. Harriman presented Molotov with a Russian translation of the reply of the American government on both questions and asked Molotov to familiarize himself with the documents. (attached on two sheets).

Molotov, familiarizing himself with the text of the reply of the American government, asked whether he correctly understood that the American government does not want to name the Allied Council for Japan a control [council]?

Harriman replied affirmatively, and explained that the American government did not want to name this council a control [council] in order not to make it like the Allied Control Council for Germany.

Molotov said that a proposal was submitted in the Soviet changes to change the wording of point 1 of the American proposals regarding the control mechanism for Japan, and to point out that this body is created in order to monitor the observance of the surrender terms by Japan.

Harriman replied that on this question the US government agreed to the inclusion of the word "control" in point 1 of their proposals.

Molotov pointed out that in such an American wording of this point in the absence of a definition in the name of the Allied Council that it is a Control Council it becomes unclear what will be controlled by this Allied body.

Harriman replied that Japan will be controlled and that the reply to this question was given by him, Harriman, in the 3 November letter and that today's reply of the American government is an addition to this letter.

Molotov pointed out that the American government accepted the idea of control in its change of 3 November. The Soviet changes to this point intend only to make it clearer what exactly is to be controlled.

Harriman again repeated that he presented the opinion of the government of the United States on this question in the 3 November letter and explained that the functions were divided between both bodies, the Far East Commission and the Allied Council for Japan.

Molotov clarified, does the American government consider its 30 October proposal the source sentence [iskhodnoe predlozhenie][?]

Harriman replied affirmatively, and added that the addition to this 30 October source

sentence is his, Harriman's, letter of 3 November.

Molotov asked, how will contentious questions be resolved in the control mechanism since almost everything presented in today's reply of the American government related to the question of the Far East Commission[?].

Harriman replied that all the differences on political questions will be resolved through the Far East Commission. Then Harriman said that he intended to present his explanations to today's reply of the American government.

Molotov agreed.

Harriman presented his verbal statement and his text (a translation is attached on three pages).

Having heard Harriman's statement, Molotov said that he preferred to familiarize himself with the Russian text of the translation of this statement, and then either pose Harriman with some questions which might arise or present the point of view of the Soviet government. Moreover, in the reply of the American government and in Harriman's statement a number of new questions are touched upon requiring the previous replies and statement of the American side being carefully re-read.

Harriman said that the government of the United States has gone far on those questions which caused doubt in the Soviet side, and that he, Harriman, sincerely hoped that such a position of the American government would be acceptable to the Soviet government.

Then Harriman said that he had been charged with informing Molotov about a question not relating to these talks between Molotov and Harriman.

Molotov agreed to hear out Harriman.

Harriman said that if the Soviet government wished to send its troops to Japan to take part in its occupation then the American government and its Supreme Commander would welcome such a decision by the Soviet government. These Soviet troops would not have a separate zone of occupation, but would be part of the occupation forces under MacArthur's command.

The British government, for example, turned to the US government with a proposal to send 30,000 British troops to Japan. He, Harriman, is not sure, but thinks that mainly the Australian government is interested in this. These British armed forces in Japan would be supported by the British Commonwealth, but they would be under MacArthur's command and carry out his orders. As the Soviet government knows, the British armed forces were in a number of places under the command of an American Supreme Commander and, on the other hand, American troops were under the command of a British Supreme Commander. This proposal to send 30,000 British troops to Japan was made by the British government, and will be considered by the government of the United States, however, there is no decision on this yet. He, Harriman, thinks that if the British Commonwealth wishes to send its troops to Japan under such conditions the US government will agree with this.

Then Harriman again clarified that he was reporting all this to Molotov for purposes of information, outside the connection of this question with these negotiations being conducted between Molotov and Harriman.

Molotov asked whether the Chinese government had not turned to the US government with a request for the Chinese armed forces to take part in the occupation of Japan.

Harriman replied, that he had no information about this question. Then he declared that if the Soviet government wished to send its troops to Japan to take part in the occupation on such conditions then the US government would regard this as favorably as the proposal to send the troops of the other Allied powers to Japan.

Molotov replied that Generalissimo Stalin had already expressed the opinion of the Soviet Government about this question in a conversation with Harriman.

Harriman pointed out that he was raising this question not for discussion, but only for Molotov's information about the status of this question.

The conversation lasted 40 minutes.

Cde. Malik was present at the conversation.

Recorded by Potrubach.

Authenticated by Potrubach

Distributed to:

Cdes. Stalin

☐ Molotov

☐ Beria

☐ Malenkov and

☐ Mikoyan.

1413-M.

2-aye