

November 19, 1945

**Verbal Statement presented to V.M. Molotov by US
Ambassador Mr. Harriman on 19 November 1945**

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Summary:

American Ambassador Harriman further clarifies the Government of the United States' position on the Far East Commission, the Allied Council for Japan, and the role of Supreme Commander General MacArthur.

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US Ambassador Mr. Harriman
presented [this] to V. M. Molotov
on 19 November 1945

EMBASSY OF THE UNITED
STATES OF AMERICA

Moscow, 19 November 1945

VERBAL STATEMENT

My Government desires to explain that, in its opinion, the Far East Commission is a suitable body for the formulation and determination of basic policy with respect to Japan, and that the proposed Allied Council for Japan under the chairmanship of General MacArthur would not have the authority to decide the main questions at its own initiative, that is, a change in the mode of control or a change in the constitutional structure of Japan. However, depriving the Supreme Commander of authority to make changes in the composition of the Japanese government by requiring the unanimity of the four powers in the Council would mean depriving him of the vital and basic authority needed to implement his orders. As indicated below, such questions would be discussed through the Supreme Commander and the Council before ordinary [ones], and any government dissatisfied with the action undertaken by him could raise this question for a decision of the Far East Commission or directly to the American government in accordance with the changes being proposed right now.

The proposals of my Government in that changed form in which they are presented provide for comprehensive consultation of the Allied Council with respect to the administration of Japan, and also provide for an observation of the method with the aid of which this administration is accomplished. It stands to reason that any government can raise a controversial question either to the Far East Commission or directly to the government of the United States in the event there are differences between the Chairman and one or more Council members. If after such consultation it becomes clear that the acts under discussion are not coordinated on the part of the Supreme Commander with a moderate interpretation of the political directives on which these actions are based, then measures can be taken to change the controversial acts. My Government thinks that it is clear to the Soviet Government that in view of its main responsibility in the control and administration of Japan it would not be possible for my government to adopt such a procedure in which the Supreme Commander could not take essential actions pending the achievement of agreement between the interested governments in the event of differences in the Council. Any indication in his relations with the Japanese authorities that the authority of the Supreme Commander is not final could only serve to weaken his authority and control over the Japanese government and thus subject the effective implementation of Allied policy in Japan to danger.

Inasmuch as the Soviet Government has made reference to the control mechanism for Romania and Hungary, my Government desires to note that at not one of the stages in cases with these countries, former enemies, did the Soviet Government not agree to any interpretation of the functions of the Allied Control Commission which could have tied the hands of the Chairman (the Soviet High Commission [SIC]) in the event of differences with the other two members or which could have required him to refrain from adopting decisions which he considered necessary pending the achievement of agreement between the governments represented in the Control Commission. The complaints of the Government of the United States and the British

government with respect to the functions of these Commissions did not concern the final authority of the Chairman, but concerned first and foremost the lack of corresponding consultations or even information before the adoption of decisions.

Both in the Allied Council as well as in the Far East Commission my Government desires to grant the maximum opportunity for information-sharing, consultation, and the drafting of coordinated policy in all areas affecting the control and also the future of Japan. The fact that any questions can be or in actuality were in the Allied Council or Far East Commission for consideration would not deprive the Soviet or any other government of directly raise any important political questions to the government of the United States before or after taking action. However, in the interests of the effective implementation of any policy it would not be possible for my Government to agree with a procedure in which any action could be dragged out for an indefinite period on account of differences between interested Allied nations. The vital guarantees on which my Government must insist in no event intends to allow a unilateral policy to be pursued by it, but only to ensure that the entire administration of Japan for which my Government admittedly bears the chief responsibility does not disintegrate before the settlement and achievement of agreement on controversial questions which might arise between the interested governments.

Translated by Potrubach.

Authenticated by Potrubach.

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