

August 23, 1945

Cable from Vyacheslav Molotov to Soviet Ambassador in the United States

Citation:

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Summary:

Drafted response from Stalin to Truman regarding Hokkaido and Kurile Islands.

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

- English Translation

PCFA [People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs]
10th Department

Outgoing No. 13410 Strictly Secret

Received: 23 hours 25 min 22 August 1945

Sent: 03 hours 15 min 23 August 1945

Cyphered telegram

Where: Washington Who: Sov. Ambassador Copy No. 1

SPECIAL. PRIORITY

In his message dated August 18, Truman, responding to cde. Stalin's message of August 16, informed of his agreement to include all of the Kurile Islands into the region, which must capitulate to the General Commander of the Soviet Armed Forces in the Far East. However, Truman made a reservation to this agreement with regard to the desire of the government of the USA to avail itself of airbase rights for land and naval planes on the one of the Kurile Islands, with military and commercial aims.

Direct to Truman the following message from cde. Stalin:

“PERSONALLY AND SECRETLY FROM PREMIER I.V. STALIN
TO PRESIDENT MR. H. TRUMAN

I received your message dated August 18.

1. I understand the content of your message in the sense that you refuse to satisfy the request of the Soviet Union about including the northern half of the [island] of Hokkaido into the region of surrender of Japanese armed forces to Soviet forces. I must say that I and my colleagues did not expect such an answer from you.
2. As for your demand to have a permanent air base on our of the Kurile islands, which, according to the Crimea decision of the three powers, must be transferred into the Soviet Union's possession, I consider it my duty to say the following concerning this matter. First of all, I must remind that such an activity was not foreseen in the decisions of the three powers either in Crimea or in Berlin, and in no measure stems from the decisions taken there. Secondly, demands of this nature are usually made to either a vanquished state, or to such an allied state, which cannot defend this or that part of its territory on its own, and expresses readiness in view of this to provide its ally with an appropriate base. I do not think that the Soviet Union can be counted in the ranks of such states. Thirdly, as your message does not account for any motivations for the demand to provide a permanent base, I must tell you wholeheartedly that neither I nor my colleagues understand which circumstances could give rise to such a demand to the Soviet Union.

22 August 1945.”

Touching in his message on the proposal of the Soviet government about the capitulation of Japanese armed forces on the island of Hokkaido to Soviet armed forces, Truman informs that measures have been taking already with regard to the capitulation of Japanese armed forces before Macarthur on all the islands of, properly, Japan, including also Hokkaido.

Confirm receipt of the telegram.

Telegraph concerning implementation.

MOLOTOV