

November 9, 1945
**From the Journal of V.M. Molotov, 'The Reception of
US Ambassador Harriman, 9 November 1945 at
1900'**

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Summary:

Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs Molotov and American Ambassador to the Soviet Union Harriman discuss lingering misunderstandings, questions, and disagreements between their two countries on the Allied Military Council and Far East Commission in Japan.

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Translation - English

Secret

FROM THE JOURNAL
OF V. M. MOLOTOV

THE RECEPTION OF US AMBASSADOR HARRIMAN
9 November 1945 at 1900

Harriman said that he had received a long telegram from the State Department and that his government had charged him with explaining the position of his government with respect to the two bodies, the creation of which is proposed in order to implement control over Japan. Harriman stated that he intended to present his statement verbally, but believes that it would be more suitable to present this in writing in the form of a note verbale which he will also present to Molotov. (A translation of the note is attached).

Molotov expressed his agreement.

The text of the note verbale was translated into Russian.

Having heard the translation, Molotov spoke of the need to familiarize himself more carefully with the translation of this note in view of the fact that a number of questions arise about its content. Then Molotov said that in the Soviet draft about the control mechanism it points out in point 3 what questions are meant when it mentions the possibility of differences between the Supreme Commander and one of the Council members. It says there that there questions of principle, and even cited specifically which of these questions, for example, the question of changes of control over Japan, and the question of the dissolution of the Japanese government and its replacement with another. The Soviet Government believes that the presence of a coordinated point of view between the members of the Control Council and the Supreme Commander on such questions would be important, and if for some reason there is no unity of opinion between members of the Control Council and the Supreme Commander then these questions are examined between the governments or in the Far East Commission. In such a case this means there are important questions, questions of principle.

Harriman replied that evidently there is a misunderstanding on the question of how these two bodies, the Allied Military Council and the Far East Commission, will function. It was pointed out in this memorandum that the questions to which Molotov was pointing will be first raised in the Far East Commission. If such questions arise in connection with the course of events then they will be handed over to the Far East Commission and will not be decided by the Supreme Commander. Harriman added that he had received an explanation that such questions will be considered in the Far East Commission. Then Harriman pointed out that both he, himself, as well as the Government of the United States, have closely familiarized themselves with the proposal of the Soviet Government and that both of them, he, himself, as well as the Government of the United States, have formed the impression that there is a misconception of the functions of both bodies here.

Harriman assured Molotov that the Government of the United States intended and wanted to consult with the Soviet Government and the other Allied governments on all questions, but in view of the complexity and danger of the situation in Japan the Government of the United States should have the opportunity to make appropriate decisions in the event that differences arise in the Allied Military Council. Harriman pointed out that it was unpleasant for him to mention the word "differences" and to talk about it.

Molotov said that, as he noted, nothing was said in Harriman's note about the proposal of the Soviet Government to name the control body in Japan the "Allied Control Council" or the "Allied Control Commission".

Harriman confirmed the absence of mention of this in the note and explained that only the main questions were touched upon in the document presented to Molotov and that he, Harriman, believes that the Allied Council will possibly be named a military [council] in view of the fact that it will consist of military representatives of the Allied countries. Then Harriman again repeated his statement which he repeatedly made in previous conversations that the main activity of the Military Council will be the implementation of directives developed by the Far East Commission.

Molotov said that he had one more question, about the voting procedure in the Far East Commission. He asked Harriman, whether he, Molotov, had correctly understood that the American Government considered it possible to come to agreement with the Soviet Government on this question.

Harriman said that he had instructions from his government to make a statement to Molotov about those questions which were laid out in the document he presented. As regards the voting procedure the term used in this document is "some room for discussion." Explaining, Harriman then pointed out this is not agreement from the United States government to accept this Soviet proposal, but is also not a repudiation of this proposal. In conclusion, Harriman pointed to the presence of a large number of proposals about the voting procedure, once more thereby implying the existence of the possibility of discussions on this question.

Molotov said that he should first familiarize himself with the text of the document which was read out, and then raise the necessary questions.

Harriman, ending the conversation, again stressed that his government did not consider the situation in Japan similar to the situation in the Balkans, and that unlike the structure of the control mechanism for the Balkan countries, the creation of a Far East Commission is envisioned for Japan, that is, a body which is not in the control scheme for the Balkan countries. Then Harriman pointed out that in the Balkans there is no such complexity of the situation and danger which exist in Japan.

Molotov noted that the Soviet Government understood and has taken this into consideration.

The conversation lasted 40 minutes.

Cde. Malik was present at the conversation.

Recorded by Potrubach

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