

August 12, 1944

PARAPHRASE OF Embassy's telegram no. 2972

Citation:

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Summary:

Harriman conveys the content of a conversation he had with Stanislaw Mikolajczyk about Soviet-Polish Relations and Polish politics during and after the war, focusing on the possibility of communism.

Original Language:

English

Contents:

Original Scan
Transcript - English

44-0912

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PARAPHRASE of Embassy's telegram No. 2972, August 12, 1944, to the Department of State.

From Ambassador Harriman. ~~Secret~~ for the President and the Acting Secretary of State.

This telegram will supplement my 2923 of August 10.

Mikolajczyk told me when he arrived in Moscow that he believed the National Council for Liberation was an instrument for the execution of the Soviet Government's intention to communize and Sovietize Poland. The British Ambassador and I told him during our first talk together that our evidence did not bear out this opinion. Shortly afterward several of the more responsible members of a group of American newspapermen to whom Mikolajczyk expressed the same opinion took strong exception to it also.

This opinion of Mikolajczyk's appeared to change as a result of his conversations with Molotov and Stalin. Clark Kerr suggested to Mikolajczyk that in his last talk with Stalin he put the question directly to him. I was told by Mikolajczyk that in raising the question indirectly he had first repeated a story he had heard of a statement made by an Austrian prisoner to the effect that Germany, although she had been beaten in the war, would now achieve her objective through other means. Because of her higher intellectual power Germany would get control of Russia by embracing communism. "Communism would fit Germany as a saddle would fit a cow", was Stalin's comment.

Then Mikolajczyk inquired of Stalin how he regarded the development of Russian-Polish relations. After explaining his fears as to the possible renaissance of militarism in Germany within twenty-five years, Stalin said that in order to avoid this danger Poland and the Soviet Union, although each leaving to the other country its own internal affairs, must "march together". Likewise he stressed the need for Poland to develop close relations with Great Britain, France, and the United States.

However, Mikolajczyk is worried still that it is the determination of the majority of the members of the Committee of Liberation to communize Poland and, to attain that end, to use him and others. He felt that Berut, whom he fears although respecting his ability, was following a communist line when he said that he (Berut) represented the feeling of the masses and that the parties did not count.

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In his conversation with me Mikolajczyk indicated that he was weighing the advisability of allowing the situation to run its course as against joining forces with the Poles here. It seemed to be his conviction that the members of the Committee were so inexperienced in governmental affairs and so unrepresentative that they would get themselves into great difficulties, and that until this was proved to be the case it might be better for the London Government to delay action on its part.

With this reasoning I cannot too strongly disagree. That the Soviet Government wants to see a settlement now, there is no doubt. Furthermore, it is obvious that the Committee feels that it has need of the help of Mikolajczyk and some of his associates. It is impossible to predict how successful the Committee will be, working alone; but the war effort will suffer to the degree that the Committee is unsuccessful in establishing stable conditions in Poland. I believe that Mikolajczyk is sincere in his statement that his primary objectives are to achieve the liberation of Poland at the earliest possible moment and to insure an election that is truly free. Therefore his policy is clearly indicated: to make every effort to work out at this time a merger of all Polish factions.

A major advantage, namely the acceptance by all of his leadership as Prime Minister, has been gained by Mikolajczyk in his visit to Moscow. The obtaining of Stalin's recognition for the first time of the Polish underground forces fighting in Warsaw and the Marshal's agreement to assist them are also a major success.

I earnestly hope that full pressure to act quickly and realistically will be brought upon Mikolajczyk and his colleagues by the British Government, and it is my recommendation that this position be supported by ourselves.

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