

October 10, 1944
**Record of Meeting at the Kremlin, Moscow on 10
October 1944, at 7 p.m.**

Citation:

"Record of Meeting at the Kremlin, Moscow on 10 October 1944, at 7 p.m.", October 10, 1944, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Public Record Office
<https://wilson-center.drivingcreative.com/document/123187>

Summary:

Eden and Molotov discuss the post-war situation in the Balkans, the installment of a Control Commission to influence Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, Yugoslavia and Germany as well as the dividing of these countries and which Great Power should exert control on each country.

Original Language:

English

Contents:

Transcript - English

RECORD OF MEETING AT THE KREMLIN, MOSCOW.
ON 10th OCTOBER, 1944, AT 7 p.m.

Present:

Secretary of State. M. Molotov.
Sir Archibald Clark Kerr. M. Vyshinski.
Mr. Oliver Harvey. M. Gusev.
Mr. A. Birse. M. Pavlov.

Mr. EDEN suggested they should talk about Bulgaria and the Balkans in general.

M. MOLOTOV suggested that they should first discuss Hungary in connexion with what Marshal Stalin had said to the Prime Minister. Marshal Stalin thought that after learning of the considerable losses sustained by the Red Army in Hungary, the army would not understand it if a principle of 50/50 were allotted. M. Molotov had been instructed by the Marshal to raise this question and to give his opinion.

Mr. EDEN said he would be glad to hear M. Molotov's opinion.

M MOLOTOV began by saying that the 75/25 principle was what the Soviet Government proposed, for the reason that Hungary bordered on the Soviet Union and the Red Army was operating in that country and suffering losses. Hungary had been and always would be a bordering country. Russia's interest was therefore comprehensible. Russia did not want Hungary to be on the side of the aggressor in the future. At the same time, Russia had no territorial claims in Hungary.

Mr. EDEN remarked that His Majesty's Government would certainly consider the question of Hungary but he would prefer to have a chance of thinking it over.

Mr. Eden went on to say that he would speak frankly. His Majesty's Government were unhappy over the whole situation in the Balkans. They were being presented with faits accomplis. Some months ago when Tito was in difficulties the British had given him refuge on the island of Vis under the protection of the Royal Navy and R.A.F., and it was only through British action that he was saved from complete extinction. The British had armed him and supported him and now, without a word or information from himself or from the Soviet Ally, he had left Vis and come to Moscow and was making an agreement about the Bulgarians in Yugoslavia which was quite unacceptable to the British. The Bulgarians treated the British as if Bulgaria had won the war and Britain had lost it. British Officers in Northern Greece had, by order of the Bulgarian authorities, been confined to their houses. His Majesty's Government must ask the Soviet Union for support and for this to be brought to an end. Mr. Eden was ready to discuss armistice terms for Bulgaria and he felt he was entitled to ask that instructions be sent through the Soviet Marshal in Sofia to the Bulgarians in Greece to treat British officers with proper respect pending the withdrawal of the Bulgarians from Greece.

M. MOLOTOV readily agreed that the matter should be put in order and that the Bulgarians must be made to feel they were not the victors. They had done enough damage to the Soviet Union and to the Allies and though Bulgaria had a new Government she should be held responsible for her past misdeeds. It was necessary to take practical measures to regulate these questions, and for Bulgaria to be taught to show respect to the Allies in Bulgaria. The Soviet Government appreciated the British claim.

Mr. EDEN did not know whether he had made himself clear. The trouble had occurred not where the Russians were stationed in Bulgaria but in Northern Greece. Orders had been given to British officers to keep to their houses and he would like M. Molotov to telegraph to the Soviet Marshal in Sofia to tell the Bulgarians to instruct their authorities in Northern Greece to treat British representatives with proper respect. In that connection His Majesty's Government were sending, in conjunction with the Greek Government, some further British Officers to Northern Greece. He did not want them to be put in prison.

M. MOLOTOV pointed out that at the outset it had been agreed to make some preliminary conditions in the case of Bulgaria for the withdrawal of her troops from Greece and Yugoslavia. So far the Soviet Government had not interfered in affairs beyond the borders of Bulgaria.

Mr. EDEN remarked that he understood and suggested, without asking for Soviet interference outside of Bulgaria, that British officers while in Greece should receive fair treatment and this the Bulgarians would do if they received instructions from the Soviet Government.

M. MOLOTOV thought they could reach an agreement on this point, but repeated that they had not interfered in affairs outside of Bulgaria and, in particular, in Greece. The question was how agreement could be reached. He would speak to Marshal Stalin.

Mr. EDEN said he would be ready to discuss the armistice terms but the above question would have to be settled. He thought that if the Soviet Government sent a telegram to their representative in Sofia to the effect that they understood some British officers in Northern Greece had been put under arrest by the Bulgarians and instructing the Soviet representative to request the Bulgarians immediately to put an end to this state of affairs, this would be enough to make the Bulgarians behave in Northern Greece until they withdrew. He hoped it would be soon.

M. MOLOTOV repeated that he would speak to Marshal Stalin.

Mr. EDEN then turned to the armistice terms. He suggested they should first discuss the difficult points. These would have to be finally settled and passed through the European Advisory Commission and agreed with their American friends. He thought that if they could agree on the general lines in Moscow they could telegraph to their representatives and then matters could be quickly arranged. The first question in dispute was where the negotiations were to be held.

M. MOLOTOV asked if this was important.

Mr. EDEN replied by asking the same question of M. Molotov.

M. MOLOTOV did not think it was important. They should take place where a speedy settlement could be made. That could be done in Moscow, where they had the experienced Moscow Commission.

Mr. EDEN said that the point was important. He was prepared to make concessions and he would suggest Moscow. The London Commission would have to agree certain terms and then the Allied representatives would meet the Bulgarians. The question was: Where? M. Molotov had suggested Moscow and Mr. Eden agreed.

M. MOLOTOV said they preferred Moscow, where they could have the help of Sir Archibald Clark Kerr.

Mr. EDEN said that the difficulty was the following, and he could not give way on it: His Majesty's Government insisted on some share in the Control Commission after the war with Germany was over. The Americans were also not prepared to give way on this point. He asked M. Molotov to understand that Britain had been at war with Bulgaria for three years and it simply would not be understood by the British people if Britain had no part in the Control Commission after the war with Germany was over. In other words, he would have to insist upon the amendment as proposed by the Americans about the future of the Control Commission.

M. MOLOTOV suggested that, before discussing that amendment, he would like to make one concession in return for Mr. Eden's concession about the place for negotiations. It was about the signature. He did not know whether Mr. Eden attached importance to the danger which lay in the wish to have two signatures, namely, Marshal Tolbukhin and General Wilson. Marshal Tolbukhin was not a naval man, but in so far as the Red Army had anything to do with the sea it was with the Black Sea. The signature of General Wilson meant that a general was signing who had something to do with Mediterranean affairs. If there was a Mediterranean General, and a Black Sea General, then Bulgaria might claim that she was not only a Black Sea Power but also a Mediterranean Power.

Mr. EDEN replied that there was no question of Bulgaria being a Mediterranean Power.

M. MOLOTOV said he understood and that Bulgaria should be punished for the help she had given to Germany. However, if this danger did not appear so great then the Soviet Government agreed to two signatures. This was a concession to British public opinion if they felt that they must have a greater share in Bulgarian affairs. The concession was greater than that made by Mr. Eden.

Mr. EDEN said he was grateful for the gesture. It would have a good effect, and the Americans would also appreciate it. He could promise that the Royal Navy would keep the Bulgarians out of the Mediterranean.

M. MOLOTOV claimed that he could not understand the American amendment. In the case of the Control Commission in Italy and Roumania all was clear. It was clear who was responsible for the activities of the Control Commission. Experience had shown that the procedure was satisfactory. But what would happen if a new method were adopted for Bulgaria after the German surrender? Three people would be responsible for the activities of the Commission. There might be confusion which would lead to friction.

Mr. EDEN said that he did not mind so much about the machinery, but he was anxious to make plain that we had some share in the Control Commission. Roumania was quite different. The American proposal was possibly a way out because it was the same as in the case of Germany. However, he was ready to look at any proposal the Soviet Government might make provided the British and Americans were not observers as in Roumania but played a part in the Control Commission.

M. MOLOTOV pointed out that in Germany there would be three zones of occupation and the comparison with Germany was not clear. He had not heard of zones in Bulgaria. Marshal Stalin had said with regard to Bulgaria that it would be right for Russia to have 90 per cent interest in Bulgaria. If they could agree on a proportion of 90/10 then agreement could easily be reached on all the rest.

Mr. EDEN pointed out that this would put Britain in the same position as in Roumania.

M. MOLOTOV agreed it would be so as regards the principle, but as regards the form of procedure a way could be found. It might be possible to think out a way to meet

American and British wishes. For instance the conditions might be discussed in London. The machinery of the Control Commission might be made more favourable for Britain.

Mr. EDEN said the American formula if accepted by the Soviet Government attracted him, but he was quite ready to consider anything the Russians proposed provided Britain had a little more in Bulgaria. It was necessary to act with speed. Delay was bad.

M. MOLOTOV agreed about the necessity for speed, but said he could not understand the American proposal. How would three representatives act in Bulgaria where there were no zones? Did the Americans and British contemplate stationing troops in Bulgaria. How could there be proper management in Bulgaria after the end of the war with Germany? It was obscure and might mean friction. He considered that 90/10 as proposed by Marshal Stalin was fair.

MR. EDEN replied that there was no intention to station troops in Bulgaria. He suggested there might be a permanent Soviet chairman on the Control Commission.

M. MOLOTOV refused to consider this as the three representatives would decide affairs which would mean that the British and Americans would have 33 per cent each and the Soviet Union 1 per cent more than they because the President was a Soviet citizen. They would have 34 percent instead of 90 percent. He asked what was the object of the proposal.

Mr. EDEN pointed out that in Roumania the British and American officers were observers. For the period of hostilities with Germany they accepted that position also in Bulgaria. But after the surrender of Germany they would like to be more than observers and have active participation. He had no views as to how to express this. Britain's share was less than the Russian because Russia had troops and administration in Bulgaria.

M. MOLOTOV thought it would be a strange kind of management where no indication was given of who was responsible.

Mr. EDEN said the main responsibility would lie with the Soviet Union.

M. MOLOTOV declared that despite this responsibility the Soviet Union was asking for 90 percent and not 100 percent.

Mr. EDEN said he did not know much about these percentages. All he wanted was a greater share than we already had in Roumania. In Roumania we had 10 percent which was almost nothing.

M. MOLOTOV pointed out that the idea of percentages arose from the meeting on the previous day, and it was worthy of consideration. Could they not agree on the following: Bulgaria, Hungary and Yugoslavia 75/25 per cent each?

Mr. EDEN said that would be worse than on the previous day.

M. MOLOTOV then suggested 90/10 for Bulgaria, 50/50 for Yugoslavia and Hungary subject to an amendment.

Mr. EDEN pointed out that they had not agreed about Bulgaria.

M. MOLOTOV remarked that he thought 90/10 was an ultimatum and meant the unconditional surrender of Moscow. However something would have to be done which

would be acceptable to all three.

Mr. EDEN said he was ready to meet M. Molotov's wishes with regard to Hungary, but he asked for M. Molotov's help to get some participation in Bulgaria after the Germans had been beaten. Possibly some other formula would be accepted. For instance we and the Americans might each have an officer on the Control Commission who would not be as important as the Soviet representative.

M. MOLOTOV then suggested 75/25 for Hungary.

M. MOLOTOV continued that they had not finished with Bulgaria. If Hungary was 75/25, then Bulgaria should be 75/25 and Yugoslavia 60/40. This was the limit to which he could go.

Mr. EDEN said he could not make this suggestion to the Prime Minister who was greatly interested in Yugoslavia. He had been at pains to champion Tito and to furnish arms. Any change in Yugoslavian percentages would upset him. Mr. Eden then suggested Hungary 75/25; Bulgaria 80/20; Yugoslavia 50/50.

M. MOLOTOV was ready to agree to 50/50 for Yugoslavia if Bulgaria were 90/10. If the figure for Bulgaria had to be amended then Yugoslavia would also have to be changed.

Mr. EDEN pointed out that with regard to Hungary we had made a concession.

M. MOLOTOV repeated that Hungary bordered on Russia and not on Britain. The Russians had suffered losses in Hungary. Marshal Stalin had mentioned this to the Prime Minister. What did 60/40 for Yugoslavia mean? It meant the coast where Russia would have less interest and would not interfere, but they were to have a greater influence in the centre.

Mr. EDEN repeated that Britain had been at war with Bulgaria for three years. The Bulgarians had treated us badly. They had beaten British and American prisoners. Russia had been at war with Bulgaria for 48 hours, and then Britain had been warned off Bulgaria who had received favorable treatment.

M. MOLOTOV did not agree. Russia had suffered more than Britain from the Bulgarians, to say nothing of the last war, but the Soviet Union did not want to increase its number of enemies. It had had the intention several times to declare war on Bulgaria. The harm done by Bulgaria to the Soviet Union was many times greater than that done to anyone else. Roumania and Bulgaria were Black Sea Powers. Neither of them had access to the Mediterranean so that Britain should have little interest in those countries. M. Molotov was not speaking of Greece. The Soviet Union was prepared to help Britain to be strong in the Mediterranean, but hoped that Britain would help the Soviet Union in the Black Sea. That was why they were interested in Bulgaria. Bulgaria was not Greece, Italy, Spain or even Yugoslavia.

Mr. EDEN said that they had little interest in Bulgaria and they were therefore asking for very little. But we had been at war with her and the question should be looked at through British eyes. Tito happened to have been accessible and Britain had helped him with arms. He had now come to Moscow but Britain had been kept in ignorance. When the British public found this out there would be criticism and rightly so. He was making an arrangement for Bulgarian troops to stay in Yugoslavia, an arrangement between Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Russia. A bad impression would be created and suspicion aroused as to Russian intentions.

M. MOLOTOV said he thought Marshal Stalin would agree to the following: 75/25 for Bulgaria, but 60/40 for Yugoslavia. He did not think that British sailors would call the Black Sea a "sea," but only a lake.

Mr. EDEN said it was the Soviet Union's lake.

M. MOLOTOV remarked that he had in mind the British point of view. The Black Sea was a lake. After such a war and the sacrifices of the Soviet Union anyone would understand that they had to make sure of their safety. As regards Marshal Tito, he had seen him for the first time now in Moscow and Marshal Stalin had not seen him before. His impression was that Tito was an honest man and friendly to the Allies. There was no doubt of it. Mr. Churchill's son had met him and would be able to speak of Tito's influence. He would confirm what M. Molotov had said about his honesty and friendliness. Tito had not told the British and Americans about his visit to Moscow. That was a double mistake and he was spoiling with the British and Americans to his own detriment. In the second place he was treating his meeting with Stalin as an advertisement to increase his prestige. In Italy he had met the Prime Minister. M. Molotov thought he was rather provincial. He had spent too much time in the mountains. He liked mystery, but he had no ill will.

Mr. EDEN said he was sorry that His Majesty's Government had not been informed. For some time Tito could not be found. But he was not in the hills. He was on the island of Vis.

M. MOLOTOV thought he would soon be in Belgrade and his provincialism would fade away.

Mr. EDEN pointed out that meanwhile he was making an agreement with the Bulgarians.

M. MOLOTOV thought that if they told him what he was to do he could remedy his mistakes. He thought they could reach agreement on that point. As regards Bulgaria M. Molotov had proposed two alternatives. He would speak to Marshal Stalin. He asked Mr. Eden which alternative he preferred.

Mr. EDEN said he did not care so much about the figures. He understood Russia's interest in Bulgaria and Britain accepted it. But Britain asked for something more there than in Roumania. If M. Molotov did not like the American formula, any other proposed by the Russians would be considered. For example, instead of calling it the Allied Control Commission it might be called the Soviet Control Commission, with an American and British representative.

M. MOLOTOV asked whether they could reach agreement in regard to Yugoslavia.

Mr. EDEN asked what they had to decide.

M. MOLOTOV claimed more weight for the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union had nothing to do with regard to affairs on the coast. They were ready to stay on their "lake."

Mr. EDEN preferred to have a common policy. There were various questions to decide. When Yugoslavia was free there was the question of the relations between Tito and the Government in London. Were they to come together? Was there to be joint administration? It was desirable that the Allies should pursue the same ideas.

M. MOLOTOV agreed that the question required attention. He asked Sir Archibald Clark Kerr for his advice how to proceed.

SIR ARCHIBALD CLARK KERR thought the best way was to bring Tito and Subasić together if the Soviet Government and His Majesty's Government used their influence in that direction and then they could decide what form of government they wanted-monarchy, or republic or anything else.

M. MOLOTOV said he would report to Marshal Stalin and thought they could find a way out. He thanked Sir Archibald for his help.

Mr. EDEN, summing up, said the one question outstanding about Bulgaria was the Control Commission after the war with Germany was over. They had agreed that the discussions should take place in Moscow, and about the joint signature.

M. MOLOTOV claimed that this was bound up with Yugoslavia.

Mr. EDEN disagreed. He appealed for a settlement of the Bulgarian question within 24 hours as the delay was embarrassing in all reports.

M. MOLOTOV said that he would do his best for a settlement in 24 hours.