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EO 12356, Sec. 1.3 (a)

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TOP SECRET

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Kremlin, August 10, 1945

Present: Sir Archibald Clark Kerr, British Ambassador
Mr. T. O. Sharman, First Secretary of British Embassy

V. M. Molotov, People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs

Mr. Pavlov, Soviet Interpreter

W. A. Harriman, American Ambassador
Edward Page, Second Secretary of American Embassy

Subject: Japanese Surrender Negotiations. (12:00 midnight)

Mr. Molotov stated that the Soviet Government was interested in obtaining the point of view of the American and British Governments on the developments in Tokyo and requested the American and British Ambassadors to make appropriate inquiries of their Governments. He explained that the Foreign Office had received a telegram from Tokyo - not from the Soviet Ambassador but from a reliable source - to the effect that the Soviet Ambassador had been unable to deliver the Soviet declaration of war until the morning of August 10, 1945 as he had not received it. When he had done so the Japanese War Minister made a statement to him reading as follows: "The Japanese Government is prepared to accept the conditions of the Declaration of July 26, 1945 to which the Soviet Government has adhered. The Japanese Government understands that this Declaration does not contain demands which prejudices the prerogatives of the Emperor as the sovereign ruler of Japan. The Japanese Government requests that they be definitely informed in this connection".

The Japanese Foreign Minister, continued Mr. Molotov had also stated that a similar statement had been transmitted to the Governments of the United States of America, England and China through the Swiss Government.

Mr. Molotov stated that the Soviet attitude towards this statement was "skeptical" since it, by making certain conditions with respect to the Emperor, did not represent unconditional surrender.

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The British Ambassador inquired as to the views of the Soviet Government with respect to the last paragraph concerning the Emperor.

Mr. Molotov repeated that the Soviet attitude was "skeptical". The Soviet impression was that the statement did not give a clear impression of unconditional surrender. It was not concrete; therefore the Soviet advance into Manchuria would continue.

The British Ambassador inquired whether he was correct in supposing that the Soviet Government would reject the Japanese proposal regarding the Emperor.

Mr. Molotov replied that the Soviet Government had answered the note by continuing its advance. This was a concrete reply.

He gave every indication that the Soviet Government was willing to have the war continue.

The British Ambassador stated that he personally did not consider that the Japanese reply constituted unconditional surrender and that the Soviet decision to continue the offensive was the correct answer to make.

Mr. Molotov remarked that the Soviet Army had already advanced 170 kilometers from the west.

The British Ambassador inquired whether the Soviet Government planned to send any instructions to the Soviet Ambassador in Tokyo.

Mr. Molotov replied in the negative.

At this point Mr. George Kennan, American Minister-Counselor, brought in the following message from the United States Government:

"1. This Government proposes that a reply as quoted in paragraph 3 to be made to the Japanese Government's acceptance of the Potsdam proclamation.

"2. In order that hostilities may be terminated and further loss of life be prevented this Government hopes that the Soviet Government will associate itself

with

with this Government in making an early reply as quoted in paragraph 3.

"3. With regard to the Japanese Government's message accepting the terms of the Potsdam proclamation but containing the statement 'with the understanding that the said declaration does not comprise any demand which prejudices the prerogatives of his Majesty as a sovereign ruler', our position is as follows:

'From the moment of surrender the authority of the Emperor and the Japanese Government to rule the state shall be subject to the supreme commander of the Allied Powers who will take such steps as he deems proper to effectuate the surrender terms.

'The Emperor and the Japanese High Command will be required to sign the surrender terms necessary to carry out the provisions of the Potsdam declaration, to issue orders to all the armed forces of Japan to cease hostilities and to surrender their arms, and to issue such other orders as the Supreme Commander may require to give effect to the surrender terms.

'Immediately upon the surrender the Japanese Government shall transport prisoners of war and civilian internees to places of safety, as directed, where they can quickly be placed aboard Allied transports.

'The ultimate form of government of Japan shall, in accordance with the Potsdam declaration, be established by the freely expressed will of the Japanese people.

'The armed forces of the Allied Powers will remain in Japan until the purposes set forth in the Potsdam declaration are achieved.'

The American Ambassador requested Mr. Molotov to bring this message immediately to the attention of his Government and endeavored to impress upon him the urgency for a prompt reply. Mr. Harriman contended that the message constituted what he thought his* Government would wish to say. It was the Emperor, and he alone, who could issue orders to all the Japanese troops to cease hostilities.

Mr. Molotov

(*) The United States Government

Mr. Molotov indicated his agreement and the British Ambassador also supported Mr. Harriman's remarks regarding the Emperor.

The American Ambassador repeated that he had been asked to bring this message at once to Mr. Molotov's attention and to telegraph immediately Mr. Molotov's reply. He explained that his Government proposed to transmit to the Japanese Government a reply in accordance with the aforementioned text in order to end hostilities and to stop losses. He expressed the hope that the Soviet Government would associate itself in the transmitting of the reply to the Japanese.

Mr. Molotov's initial reactions were noncommittal. He stated that he would give the American Ambassador an answer tomorrow.

Mr. Harriman stated that this would not be satisfactory - his Government had to receive an answer tonight.

Mr. Molotov thereupon agreed to take up the matter immediately with his Government and to endeavor to furnish the American Ambassador with a reply this evening.

* * * *

Mr. Molotov requested the American and British Ambassadors to call at 2:00 a.m. He read to them the following signed statement.

"The Soviet Government considers that the above mentioned reply should be presented in the name of the principal powers waging war with Japan.

"The Soviet Government also considers that, in case of an affirmative reply from the Japanese Government, the Allied Powers should* reach an agreement on the candidacy or candidacies for representation of the Allied High Command to which the Japanese Emperor and the Japanese Government are to be subordinated.

"August 11th 1945, 2 A.M. Moscow Time.

"On the authority of the Government of the U.S.S.R.
Signed: V. Molotov."

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(*) Pavlov translated "should" as "must". The word in Russian may be translated in either sense.

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The American Ambassador inquired as to the exact meaning of the last sentence.

Mr. Molotov pointed out that there was not a combined command in the Far East; therefore it would be necessary to reach agreement as to the Allied representative or representatives who would deal with the Japanese.

The American Ambassador inquired whether this was a concrete acceptance of the United States proposal.

Mr. Molotov replied that the American proposal did not contain the name of any representative which had been agreed upon by the principal Allies. The United States Government should make some suggestion and the Allies could subsequently agree as to who the Supreme Commander would be.

Mr. Harriman stated that this was utterly out of the question. He knew that the Soviet reply would be unsatisfactory to his Government. It gave veto power to the Soviet Government in the choice of the Supreme Commander - no person could be appointed without Soviet agreement. He inquired whether the Soviet Government would be ready to accept Mac Arthur.

Mr. Molotov replied he did not know, he thought so; however he would have to consult his Government.

The American Ambassador stated that consultation was one thing; however as the Soviet reply now stood it gave veto power to the Soviet Government. It gave only qualified approval. His Government surely would not accept it.

Mr. Molotov replied that it was conceivable that there might be two Supreme Commanders; Vasielevski and MacArthur.

The American Ambassador thereupon informed Mr. Molotov in no uncertain terms that this was absolutely inadmissible.

Mr. Molotov replied that he had informed Mr. Harriman of the Soviet reply and requested him, whether he liked it or not, to transmit it to his Government.

Mr. Harriman stated he would do so. However, he would like to call Mr. Molotov's attention to the fact

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that the United States had carried the main burden of the war in the Pacific on its shoulders for four years. It had therefore kept the Japanese off the Soviet's back. The Soviet Government had been in the war for two days. It was only just that the Soviet Government should place in American hands the choice as to who would be Supreme Commander. The present Soviet position was absolutely impossible. It was unthinkable that the Supreme Commander could be other than American.

Mr. Molotov somewhat heatedly replied by stating that he did not wish to reply to Mr. Harriman's remarks. For by so doing he would have to make comparison with the European War. He merely wished to request that Mr. Harriman advise his Government of the Soviet reply.

* * * *

When the American Ambassador reached his office Mr. Pavlov telephoned him and stated that Mr. Molotov had consulted the Generalissimo. Mr. Pavlov continued that there had been a misunderstanding, that only "consultation" and not "reaching an agreement" had been intended, therefore the Generalissimo had suggested that the words "come to an agreement" be replaced by the word "consult".

Mr. Harriman pointed out that he believed the words "on candidacies" would also be unacceptable and asked him to convey this message to Molotov.

Within a few minutes Mr. Pavlov called back and stated that these words should be struck out.

The final paragraph therefore reads as follows:

"The Soviet Government also considers that, in case of an affirmative reply from the Japanese Government, the Allied Powers should consult on the candidacy for representation of the Allied High Command to which the Japanese emperor and the Japanese Government are to be subordinated."

Mr. Pavlov stated that Mr. Molotov had agreed to confirm the revised text of this paragraph in writing.

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