

THE HARRIMAN REVIEW



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Averell Harriman holds a special place in the ranks of important American diplomats of the twentieth century who represented the U.S. in Moscow, not only thanks to his personal qualities, but also because the years of his ambassadorship coincide with what was perhaps the most critical period in Soviet-American relations: the conception of a military and political alliance that came into being in the monumental fight against a deadly enemy. Harriman, Roosevelt's trusted emissary, highly esteemed by both the Kremlin and Whitehall, became an eyewitness and active participant in political decisions that were to affect the fate of millions of people. Although Harriman's Moscow mission has been thoroughly chronicled by the ambassador himself,¹ and has also been studied by several Russian and American historians,² the release of new archival documents in Russia and the U.S. occasions a new reading of many pages from this historic diplomatic mission.

A Promising Beginning

On September 27, 1943, M. Hamilton, the acting chargé d'affaires for the U.S. in the USSR, paid a visit to People's Commissar for Foreign

¹ W. A. Harriman with E. Abel, *Special Envoy to Churchill and Stalin, 1941-1946* (New York, 1975).

² A. Iu. Borisov, *SSSR i SShA: soiuzniki v gody voiny, 1941-1945* (Moscow, 1983); V. Batiuk and V. Evstaf'ev, *Pervye zamorozki. Sovetsko-amerikanskie otnosheniia v 1945-1950 gg.* (Moscow, 1995); V. Iungbliud, *Era Ruzvel'ta: Diplomaty i diplomatii* (St. Petersburg, 1996); D. Dunn, *Caught Between Roosevelt and Stalin. America's Ambassadors to Moscow* (Lexington, 1998); D. Mayers, *The Ambassadors and America's Soviet Policy* (New York, 1995).

Affairs, V. M. Molotov, to communicate his government's desire to appoint Averell Harriman the new ambassador to Moscow. The visitor inquired whether the customary biographical sketch would be necessary in this instance. "Harriman," replied Molotov, "is well known to the Soviet government and he is also widely known among the people of the USSR."³ Indeed, by this time Harriman had made his mark and was a welcome figure in Moscow.

The history of Harriman's special relations with the USSR date back to the 1920s and the signing of the "Concession Agreement between the Government of the USSR and W. A. Harriman & Co., Regarding Manganese Deposits in Chaituri," the largest transaction of its kind between the U.S. and Soviet Russia, totaling some 4 million dollars. Harriman's concession, his arrival in the USSR in 1926 and his negotiations with Leon Trotsky and other Soviet leaders of the time are well-documented facts. Far less known is the exceptional political significance that the Soviet government attached to the transaction and its relations with the chief partner of this agreement. Thus, in the spring of 1926, when difficulties began with the concession as a result of rival mining operations of manganese ore in the Nikopol region, G. V. Chicherin, the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, addressed a special letter to all members of the Politburo and his colleagues in the Commissariat (NKID), in which he warns:

Harriman's concession has garnered a great deal of attention in America and a break with

³ Arkhiv vneshnei politiki RF [Archive of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation], f. 06, p. 29, d. 332, l. 9. Henceforth AVP RF.

him will have exceedingly unfavorable consequences for our further relations with America. In addition, we must take into consideration the importance of Harriman himself, who ought to be met halfway, considering the benefit that we can still derive from him... He is the son of a famous father, who might yet outstrip his father. He is a young man with enormous energy, talent, exceptional prospects and ambition. He understood the colossal significance of future interrelations between the USSR and the U.S. and has set himself the goal, so to speak, of opening up the USSR for America, and building his historic career on the foundation of these interrelations... It would be the height of absurdity to deprive ourselves of this highly useful tool by antagonizing him; this question should be approached not with near-sighted bureaucratic measures, but with a broad view of the significance of the pertinent facts.⁴

The signing in the following year, 1927, of compromise alterations to the agreement in order to avert a “breach” was regarded in the Politburo as a very important factor in maintaining the reputation of the USSR in U.S. business circles.⁵ When continuing the concession became impossible for Harriman, the NKID did everything possible to make it look like an amicable parting. In February 1928, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs resolved “that the GKK [State Concessions Commission—V.P.] take into account the extraordinary political importance, within the bounds of reason, and meet Harriman halfway in his claims on us so as to avert a break with him and to deprive him of the possibility of prosecuting us.”⁶ It is not surprising that the final conditions for the dissolution of the agreement proved to be highly favorable for Harriman—the Soviet government pledged to return in the course of 12 years (beginning in 1931) 3.45 million of the 4 million capital that had been expended, paying 7 percent annually on the remaining debt and an additional loan of 1 million dollars from Harriman—the first major American loan to Soviet Russia. The Soviets scrupulously fulfilled this

obligation, even during the most difficult period of the war (until July 1943), making regular payments on their debt in gold equivalent. As a result, Harriman realized a profit, and received 5.8 million dollars,⁷ which probably made a big impression on the financier who had acquired, as the European papers wrote, a personal interest “in the fact that in the USSR everything took its normal course so that the solvency of the Soviet government would not fall even lower...”⁸

But if the concession episode had left a bitter taste on both sides, Harriman’s next appearance on the Soviet scene fully satisfied all parties involved. I am referring to the well-known mission of Harriman and Beaverbrook to Moscow in September-October 1941—the first meeting of representatives of the three great powers, which marked the beginning of large-scale aid to the Soviet Union on the part of the U.S. and England. Harriman took an active role in the mission’s preparations and during the course of the negotiations. Vying with the venerable Beaverbrook, he secured for himself the role of representing the “chief supplier,” by combining firmness in defending the U.S. position with an understanding of the questions from the Soviet side. Moreover, his self-possession and composure allowed the Anglo-Saxons to withstand Stalin’s psychological pressure—all of which made a great impression on the Soviet leadership and helped to secure the mission’s success. Stalin thanked Roosevelt for entrusting the negotiations to “such an authoritative person as Mr. Harriman, whose participation in the work of the Moscow conference of the three powers was so productive.”⁹ And although these negotiations were difficult, and the aid promised by the Allies afterwards proved to be far from the total amount, this did not change the main political point that was achieved in the eyes of Moscow—henceforth the USSR would really not be alone in its deadly struggle. “Now we will win!” exclaimed the emotional Maxim Litvinov who had returned from disgrace under pressure from the Allies; Molotov expressed the same thought in words that for him were unusually impassioned: “the pulling together on joint efforts that has taken place before our eyes

⁴ AVP RF, f. 0129, op. 4, p. 112, d. 153, l. 35.

⁵ See A. I. Mikoyan’s memorandum, “Ob otnosheniakh s Amerikoi [On relations with America],” dated July 27, 1927: Arkhiv Prezidenta RF [Archive of the President of the Russian Federation], f. 3, op. 66, d. 284, l. 50. Henceforth AP RF.

⁶ AVP RF, f. 0129, op. 4, p. 112, d. 153, l. 63.

⁷ Account of Soviet Notes to August 1943, Library of Congress, W. A. Harriman Papers (henceforth WAHP), Special Files, Georgia Manganese Company, Cont. 724.

⁸ “Obzor inostrannoi pechati informotdela GKK ot 5.11.1928: AVP RF, f.0129, op. 4, p. 112, d. 153, l. 89.

⁹ *Perepiska Predsedatelia Soveta Ministrov SSSR s prezidentami SShA i prem'er-ministrami Velikobritaniiia vo vremia Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny 1941-1945 gg.* [henceforth *Perepiska*], vol. 1 (Moscow, 1957), p. 11.

to a large extent will determine our ultimate success in our fight against Hitler.”¹⁰

On his part, Harriman also fully realized the historical significance of what had taken place, although he invested it with a somewhat different and more personal meaning. As Robert Meiklejohn, Harriman’s faithful secretary, wrote in his diary, the boss “came back about eleven o’clock from his meeting at the Kremlin looking like the cat that swallowed the mouse... he said that he has accomplished the most important thing he has ever done.”¹¹ It was not only that he, Harriman, had facilitated an historic breakthrough in relations between the two great powers that resulted in a military alliance, but also that he saw these relations in a new light. In Moscow, Harriman had seen a country that was capable of fighting and standing its ground, and a leader who was a firm realist with whom the United States, it seemed, would be able to deal not only during the war, but afterwards as well.

Upon his return to Washington, Harriman enthusiastically disseminated this conviction of his in government circles and in closed briefings for the American press. One of these appearances, held at the National Press Club on October 30th, was intercepted by Soviet intelligence and must have pleased the Kremlin, despite its clumsy translation. Harriman praised the “very able people,” the Red Army’s officers who are “capable beyond all belief,” the technical acumen of the Soviet workers and engineers, the government’s “good personnel,” and especially the Commander in Chief: “I have never met a man who kept such an extraordinarily large store of facts and information in his head... He knows every gun in every factory... He knows what tactics the Germans use and why... I am certain that he is the chief military thinker in the USSR and that he directs their war. I am certain,” concluded Harriman, “that the USSR will fight as long as they have arms and there is no reason for them not to have them if England and the U.S. do everything they should. I believe that we must enter this war, and the sooner, the better.”¹²

In so far as Stalin, as Harriman quickly realized, was the only person in the system he had created who made the serious decisions, personal contact with him was a decisive factor. Harriman

would later recall that he left with the impression that the best chances for achieving mutual understanding in the war and afterwards would be through direct interaction with Stalin.¹³ No wonder Harriman was proud of the beginnings of his personal contact with the all-powerful dictator and the role that he had played in establishing ties between Stalin and Roosevelt, having suggested to them both the idea of corresponding with each other regularly.¹⁴

After this first trip to Moscow, Roosevelt and Hopkins first proposed to Harriman that he take the place of the unpopular U.S. Ambassador to Moscow, Laurence Steinhardt, but he turned them down, as he prized his strategic post in London, where he was accepted, as he put it, practically as a member of the cabinet.¹⁵ While retaining his role as liaison between Roosevelt and Churchill, Harriman endeavored—and not without success—to become at the same time the main go-between for Roosevelt and Stalin. With the President’s knowledge and approval, he began his own personal correspondence with Stalin and Molotov concerning problems of supplies to the Soviets and arming the Polish units in the USSR; thanks to his direct connection with Roosevelt and Hopkins, he was actively involved in decisions on the most important issues of Soviet-American relations, in the process edging out the new U.S. Ambassador to Moscow, Admiral William H. Standley.

Harriman’s next visit to Moscow, in August 1942 with Churchill, who had taken upon himself the difficult mission of explaining to Stalin the reasons for the delay with the second front, once again confirmed the American diplomat’s special role as trusted confidant of the Big Three. On Stalin’s invitation, Harriman took an active part with Churchill in all the negotiations, with the exception of the two leaders’ “night-time dinner” in Stalin’s apartment. And even though the conversation would sometimes turn unpleasant, it furthered the strengthening of personal contact between the participants who parted on good terms.

On his frequent visits to Washington, Harriman helped push forward Soviet demands in the capital’s corridors of power. Drew Pearson, the well-informed reporter for the *Washington Post*,

¹⁰ *Pravda*, October 2, 1941.

¹¹ Robert Meiklejohn, *World War II Diary, Mission to Moscow 1941*: WAHP, Special Files, Meiklejohn Files, Cont. 211.

¹² *Arkhiv Sluzhby Vneshnei Razvedki (Archive of Russian Foreign Intelligence; henceforth SVR RF)*.

¹³ WAHP, Writings, H. Feis Files, Harriman’s Recollections, 1952-1954, Cont. 872.

¹⁴ Roosevelt to Hopkins, October 1941: F. D. Roosevelt Library (henceforth FDRL), President Secretary File, Diplomatic Correspondence, Russia, Box 49.

¹⁵ A. Harriman to W. Jeffers, May 30, 1941, WAHP, Chronological File (henceforth CF), Cont. 165.

described Harriman's behind-the-scenes activities as follows:

Harriman was particularly critical of a certain type of sub-rosa propaganda here to the effect that we should give Russia just enough aid to enable her to weaken Hitler but not enough to enable her to survive as a strong force after the war. Harriman regards this as the most dangerous type of war talk which must be stamped out... He is urging all his friends, especially high Government officials, not to let one day go by without asking the question: "What has been done today to increase aid to Russia?"¹⁶

In early 1943 the Americans, with Harriman's active participation, met the Soviet demands on the Third Protocol regarding the tonnage of deliveries to be supplied by the U.S. and England.¹⁷ Another tangible contribution by Harriman in the implementation of the Lend-Lease Programs for the USSR was his personal initiative of rebuilding the railroad lines through Iran, which as a result by spring 1943 had become the most important artery for Allied deliveries to the USSR.

In June during a private lunch for two, the President, having engaged Harriman's self-esteem, asked him to take on the difficult and important mission of putting right the relationship with Stalin. Hopkins provided other arguments as well: Harriman's work in London was becoming less important, because the work there was already done, while the Moscow post was becoming a priority since it was precisely relations with Moscow, above all, on which the defeat of Japan and the postwar order in the world would depend. In August, Harriman finally gave his consent. He realized the danger of becoming "a glorified communications officer" (as he would write Roosevelt) at his new post, and he knew how Western diplomats in Moscow "were fenced in,"¹⁸ but pressure from the President and his sense of the importance of the moment gained the upper hand. "Real accomplishment by an ambassador in Moscow," he wrote Roosevelt from London in July 1943, "is a gamble with the odds against

success but the stakes are great both for the war in Europe and in the Pacific—and after."¹⁹

Indeed, it was a critical moment in Allied relations with the USSR. The Soviets did not conceal their indignation at yet another postponement of an issue that was of primary importance for them, namely, the opening of the second front in Europe. Stalin, therefore, delayed agreeing to a meeting of the Big Three as well as his obligations regarding Japan, instead recalling ambassadors in London and Washington who enjoyed popularity in the West, and he took his time responding to Allied proposals for military collaboration. All this resulted in great anxiety in Washington, where they not only awaited the USSR's decisions on the "Japanese question," but also feared the Kremlin's unilateral actions in Germany and Eastern Europe, and needed closer strategic military coordination with the Soviet Union for their preparations for the "big invasion in Europe," the decision for which was made at the Anglo-American conference in Quebec. All this rendered particular significance to the role of the U.S. ambassador in Moscow.

Even before his official appointment Harriman had thoroughly prepared himself for the impending mission. He began by laying out a plan of serious reform for the Moscow Embassy. The main problem in its operations (which Harriman knew only too well from personal experience in London) was the lack of coordination between the diplomatic staff and the supply mission, headed by Brigadier General Phillip R. Faymonville. This interdepartmental dissension, intensified by personal conflict between Hopkins' "pro-Soviet" protégé Faymonville and the "anti-Soviet" military attachés, headed by Colonel Joseph Michela (whom Standley supported), not only created a lack of coordination in the work of the American representatives, but also undermined the position of the ambassador. Therefore, Harriman, who in London had zealously protected the autonomy of his mission from the embassy, now adopted the role of a strict centralist. In personal negotiations with General George Marshall, the Army Chief of Staff, and the State Department, and with the President's backing, Harriman carried out his plan to reorganize the U.S. representation in Moscow: instead of the structure of military attachés and supply mission, a single military mission, which reported to the ambassador, was created, headed by the experienced Brigadier General John R. Deane, Secretary to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, as

¹⁶ *Washington Post*, September 8, 1942.

¹⁷ Spalding to Hopkins, May 11, 1943. FDRL, H. Hopkins Papers, Special Assistant to the President. Box 177.

¹⁸ *Special Envoy*, pp. 219, 214.

¹⁹ *Foreign Relations of the United States* (henceforth FRUS), The Conferences at Cairo and Teheran, p. 15.

recommended by Harriman; the two main antagonists, Michela and Faymonville, were recalled home. At the same time, in addition to the centralization of power in his hands, Harriman bagged another imperceptible but important “must have” for himself—he was given a supplementary Army channel for sending coded communications, which allowed him to be in direct communication with the White House, bypassing the State Department. Harriman came to an agreement with the President’s advisor on military affairs, Admiral William Leahy, that he would be kept apprised of the most important military strategic decisions.²⁰ Harriman also took care that the Embassy be staffed with real experts on Russia by securing the consent of the State Department and Hopkins on the transfer of George Kennan to Moscow.

During several meetings with Roosevelt, Harriman was given a detailed view of the President’s thinking and plans with regard to Moscow. Roosevelt sincerely hoped that he would succeed in holding back Stalin from taking unilateral actions unacceptable to the West (including territorial claims in Eastern Europe) by recognizing the Soviet Union as a Great Power that enjoyed full rights, by giving him guarantees of security and freedom of communications, as well as aid for postwar reconstruction. Harriman did not contradict the President, even though some of his ideas, for example, conducting a plebiscite in the Baltics after their liberation by Soviet troops, seemed naïve to him. He agreed with Roosevelt on the main thing: “They are only human, those Russians... Stalin can be handled,” he confidently declared in reply to Admiral Standley’s gloomy warnings during their farewell meeting in Washington.²¹ Harriman would later recall that his main goals when he went to Moscow were to assist in the maximal contribution of the USSR in the utter defeat of Hitler’s Germany and to facilitate the USSR’s entry into the war with Japan. This was worth making an effort for.

All that remained were the final formalities: the sale of the tsarist government bonds (U.S. law prohibited diplomats from having business interests in the country of residence), resigning from the board of directors of the family railroad companies Union Pacific and Illinois Central.²² In

lieu of this he received a government salary of \$17,500 a year plus a per diem allowance. On the 7th of October, the day after his candidacy was presented by the President, the Senate unanimously confirmed Harriman’s appointment as Ambassador to Moscow, and on October 8th in London he was sworn in, pledging himself to fight the enemies of the United States, foreign and domestic. The visa documents he received as diplomat from the Soviet Consulate in London indicate that “Mr. Harriman, William Averell is traveling alone.”²³ Harriman’s wife, who did not leave her native New York even for comfortable London, did not go to Moscow, where the role of Embassy hostess was filled, as it had been in London, by their daughter Kathleen.

News about Harriman’s appointment had reached Moscow even before the appointment was announced, through intelligence channels and other sources. The intelligence service, quoting a high-ranking U.S. government official, reported, “Harriman was a very good choice for ambassador to the USSR. He is a sober-minded person who gets on with people wonderfully. Moreover, he is one of Stalin’s few personal friends abroad.”²⁴ In the United States, Harriman’s appointment was clearly viewed with approval: advocates in the administration of closer ties with the USSR considered it a “good sign,” the newspapers characterized it as a “hand of friendship extended to the Kremlin,” while opponents of closer ties found it difficult to find fault with an independent, popular businessman.²⁵

In the biographical resume compiled by the People’s Commissariat for Foreign Affairs in connection with his appointment, the new ambassador is characterized in an uncommonly positive light as Roosevelt’s faithful comrade-in-arms and a champion of bettering American-Soviet relations. The concluding words of this highly official document also carry a ring that is unusual for Soviet evaluations of “bourgeois figures” written during this period:

It seems that Harriman’s words are not at odds with his actions. He was and remains an advocate of strengthening Soviet-American relations, an advocate of President Roosevelt’s domestic and foreign policies. He is an advocate for the utter destruction of

²⁰ Library of Congress, W. Leahy Papers, Diaries, September 27, 1943, Reel 3.

²¹ *Special Envoy*, pp. 227-28.

²² Russian Holdings (Memo for W. Harriman); A. Harriman to the Board of Directors of Union Pacific, October 1, 1943, WAHP, CF, Cont. 170.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ AVP RF, f. 0129, op. 28, p. 156, d. 12, l. 38.

²⁵ O. Cox to A. Harriman, October 1, 1943, FDRL, O. Cox Papers, Lend-Lease Files, Box 86; *Christian Science Monitor*, September 28, 1943.

Hitler's war machine and an opponent of any compromise whatsoever with Hitler's Germany.²⁶

In Moscow, even before he had presented his credentials to Mikhail Kalinin, nominal head of state,²⁷ Harriman immediately found himself in the center of Allied diplomacy, namely, the Moscow Conference of the foreign ministers of the three great powers, which for the first time was to discuss a wide range of political and military issues. It fell to Harriman's lot, as is usual for ambassadors in such situations, to play the role of the delegation's chief advisor and hospitable host of Spaso House, the residence of the U.S. Ambassador. In addition, he had a secret commission from Roosevelt—to keep an eye on Secretary of State Hull so that he wouldn't "mess" things up before Roosevelt's meeting with Stalin.²⁸ The Ambassador, therefore, took part in all of Hull's meetings with Stalin and Molotov. However, the President's caution proved to be unwarranted: the Kremlin liked the stately, gray-haired Hull, partly because he did not raise unpleasant subjects, such as the Soviet Union's free hand in Eastern Europe. The old Wilsonian won Soviet acceptance for his chief concern—the Declaration on General Security, which included China among the four signers. Attempts by Harriman behind the scenes to nudge Hull and Eden to discuss with the Russians the issue of Eastern Europe (above all, Poland) came to naught. Then Harriman himself in a meeting with Molotov on October 24th made an attempt to clarify (and at the same time forestall) the Soviet position on this issue, emphasizing that although the U.S. understood the USSR's wish to have friendly regimes on its western borders, the Americans held the position that these countries should retain the right to self-determination, good relations with the West and in no sense be subordinated to the Soviet Union. The People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs assured Harriman that the conditions he had just described were not at variance with Soviet policies, although

Harriman remained highly skeptical of these assurances.²⁹

Harriman's other priorities during the Moscow Conference were to reassure the Soviets about the second front and also to receive more reliable evidence of the USSR's entry into the war with Japan. On these two points the Americans met with success. The strategy proposed by Harriman in conference at the American Embassy, namely, to provide the Soviets with maximum access to information on Allied military actions and plans in order to convince them of the seriousness of their intentions, while at the same time avoiding any new concrete obligations, helped to consolidate mutual trust. Hints made by Soviet leaders (Stalin in a meeting with Hull, Molotov in a meeting with Harriman) transparently conveyed their intentions in regard to Japan.³⁰ Other important understandings were also reached at this conference: the creation of a European advisory commission; the terms of Germany's unconditional surrender and how it should be dealt with afterwards; the creation of an advisory council in Italy, etc. On the whole, the results of the conference were without a doubt positive for all three parties and created favorable conditions for the meeting of the Big Three in Teheran. However, in his final report to the President, dated November 5th, Harriman was far from euphoric. Judging by everything, he writes, the "Soviets have evidently decided that they would take a shot at working together with the British and ourselves in dealing with the war and post-war problems," and during the course of the conference itself, "being admitted for the first time into the councils as a full member with the British and ourselves," convinced them even more of this possibility. At the same time, Harriman emphasized, serious differences emerged between Soviet policies and those of the Allies. The chief of these was the issue of the second front, because "it is impossible to overemphasize the importance they place strategically on the initiation of the so-called second front next spring." To ease these Soviet concerns Harriman proposed that in addition to a personal meeting between Roosevelt and Stalin, representatives from the USSR should be invited to the Anglo-American military consultations, although he admitted that this process "will be to some extent a nuisance and time-consuming." But the greatest threat to Allied relations, as he

²⁶ AVP RF, f. 0129, op. 27, p. 152, d. 41, l. 6.

²⁷ For a subtle psychological interpretation of Harriman's initial mood in Moscow, see Frank Costigliola, "I had come as a Friend": Emotion, Culture, and Ambiguity in the Formation of the Cold War, 1943-45," *Cold War History*, vol. 1, no. 1 (August 2000), pp. 103-14.

²⁸ WAHP, Writings, H. Feis Papers, Cont. 45 (Moscow Conference).

²⁹ Memorandum of Conversation with Molotov, October 24, 1943, WAHP, CF, Cont. 170.

³⁰ Personal Notes regarding dinner with Molotov and Stalin, October 30, 1943. Ibid.

perceptibly observed, lay in Eastern Europe. The Soviet Union, wrote Harriman, will firmly insist on a return to the borders of 1941: "They have the impression that this has been tacitly accepted by the British and the fact that we didn't bring up the issue may have given them the impression that we would not raise serious objections in the future." As far as the USSR's western neighbors were concerned, above all Poland, the essence of the Soviet position on this issue, according to Harriman, was that "although they would keep us informed, they'd take unilateral action in respect to these countries in the establishment of relations satisfactory to themselves." However, the Ambassador added, "that rigid attitude may well be tempered in proportion to their increased confidence in their relations with the British and ourselves in the establishment of overall world security."³¹

Consequently, the Allies had a fair chance of resolving the most complicated issues, providing that mutual trust was strengthened and it was this that Harriman viewed as the most significant achievement of the Moscow conference, equal in importance to the concrete agreements. Summing up the accomplishments at a meeting of the Embassy's diplomatic staff, he paid particular attention to the "willingness and ability of the representatives of the three countries to work together," which brought relations with the Russians "close to the type of intimacy that exists in the discussions between the British and ourselves." Developing this notion set forth by the Ambassador, the State Department advisor on East European affairs, Charles Bohlen, who was present at the meeting added that the conditions had now been created for the discussion of any and all problems, including those on which the Allies did not all agree, without detriment to their fundamental unity of purpose; this new situation "marked the return of the USSR as a fellow member of the society of nations with the sense of responsibility that this carried with it."³² This new turn in Allied relations was also sensed on the Soviet side, flattered by its acceptance into the club of the Great Powers. "The Conference revealed the presence of common points of view on a number of important questions on the war and the postwar order," stated a memorandum of the NKID on the results of the Moscow Conference. "The Soviet delegation's observations and

proposals were taken into account very seriously."³³

The main task after the conference, as Harriman summed it up at the Embassy meeting, was to maintain and develop the conference's spirit of trust. To accomplish this they needed "to show the Russians (1) we are for the war first, (2) we accept them as equals; (3) we have an intense interest in their reconstruction."³⁴

This last point for a time became Harriman's favorite hobby-horse, since he viewed postwar economic assistance not only as a means for strengthening the Russians' trust, but also as a lynch-pin for influencing their policies.

In anticipation of the Teheran Conference Harriman flew to Cairo to meet the U.S. delegation and assist in the preparations for the conference. At the meeting of the Joint Chiefs of Staff he once again emphasized the importance for the Russians of the issue of the second front ("it had been difficult for the Russians to understand why two nations of the strength of the U.S. and Britain have been unable to contain more German forces than they have"³⁵), while in talks with Hopkins during their flight to Teheran it was agreed that Roosevelt should be roused to raise the issue of aid to the Soviet Union for postwar reconstruction.³⁶ The President, however, did not do this; in a note to Harriman he pleaded lack of time ("I didn't have time to talk with the Russians"); he commissioned Harriman to clear up Moscow's questions and to make his own recommendations on that score.³⁷

The question of opening the second front was finally resolved in Teheran once and for all, which the Soviet diplomats considered to be the chief achievement "of the Stalin-Roosevelt-Churchill conference."³⁸ At a meeting at the Embassy upon his return to Moscow, Harriman stated that the most important psychological effect of Teheran was that "the conference laid at rest the feeling that existed among the Russians that we were not doing enough and doubts that existed as to our real intentions." No less important, in his view, was the establishment of direct personal contact between Stalin and Roosevelt: "Stalin felt very much at home with the President. Our ideas are much

³¹ A. Harriman for the President, November 5, 1943, WAHP, CF, Cont. 170.

³² Staff Meeting at American Embassy, November 9, 1943. Ibid.

³³ AP RF, f. 3, op. 63, d. 233, l. 67.

³⁴ Staff Meeting at American Embassy, November 9, 1943, WAHP, CF, Cont. 170.

³⁵ JCS Meeting, Cairo, November 24, 1943, WAHP, CF, Cont. 170.

³⁶ Memorandum of Flight, Cairo to Teheran, November 27, 1943, Ibid.

³⁷ F. Roosevelt to A. Harriman, December 1, 1943, WAHP, CF, Cont. 171.

³⁸ AP RF, f. 3, op. 63, d. 222, l. 136.

closer to the Russians than those of the British... Stalin treated the President as the senior member of the party and was very anxious to find what was on his mind and he liked what he found and treated the President with extraordinary deference and respect.” The ambassador concluded that the wording of the Teheran Communiqué, “‘Friends in fact, spirit and in purpose’ sounds like generalities but there is a meaning in every sentence and it describes very much what the discussion was and the resulting effect on the men.”³⁹

Encouraged by the results of Teheran and his reception in Moscow, Harriman advanced an ambitious agenda for several aspects of American-Soviet cooperation. At his suggestion the Ambassador’s old friend, Director of U.S. Office of Strategic Services, William Donovan, visited Moscow in late December 1943 with the aim of arranging cooperation between the two countries’ intelligence services. Donovan was received by Molotov, after which followed a cordial meeting with his Soviet counterpart, the head of the PGU (First Chief Directorate) NKGB, General P. Fitin, at which they came to an agreement about an exchange of representatives of the OSS and PGU between Moscow and Washington. “Our comrades,” remarked Molotov at a meeting with Harriman on December 31st, “are also pleased with the meetings with General Donovan, moreover, Donovan’s proposal to exchange representatives will evidently be deemed to be expedient.”⁴⁰

The Kremlin’s unusual responsiveness to Donovan’s proposal was understandable—given the differences between a regime of secrecy and the freedom to gather information in the two capitals, which made the exchange much more advantageous for Moscow than Washington. Nevertheless, the plan received Roosevelt’s support and preparations for opening the missions were begun on both sides. In a move that was absolutely unheard of for that time, Fitin gave the Americans his telephone number, which won over even General Deane: “It was my first telephone number in Russia and I felt I had achieved a tremendous victory.”⁴¹ The personnel of both missions was being selected, and the Americans had even managed to begin acquiring the necessary equipment, including caps with ear-

flaps.⁴² However, in Washington they quickly ran into an obstacle: the Director of the FBI, J. Edgar Hoover, with the support of Admiral Leahy and A. A. Berle, Jr. (who was responsible for security issues in the State Department) talked the President out of this risky undertaking. On March 15th Roosevelt charged Harriman with the task of explaining this decision to Stalin “for purely domestic, political reasons,” alluding thereby to the forthcoming presidential election. Harriman, who had viewed the exchange as a breakthrough in cooperation at the most sensitive levels, was exceedingly disappointed. “We have penetrated here for the first time one intelligence branch of the Soviet government and I am certain this would be the opening wedge to far greater intimacy in other branches if pursued.”⁴³ Roosevelt, however, was unyielding and this decision, which later Harriman would call “supreme folly,” remained in effect.

A similar fate ultimately befell another of Harriman’s large-scale projects, namely, granting the Soviet Union credit for the purchase of American goods and equipment after the war. He had first raised the subject on his own initiative as early as October 1943 in talks with the People’s Commissar for Foreign Trade, A. I. Mikoyan, who, in his words, had shown “great interest.” As a businessman and diplomat, Harriman well understood the significance of this issue for resolving the main primary and economic issue for the Soviet Union after the war—reconstruction (as he wrote to the State Department in November 1943). He viewed the purpose of granting this credit as assistance to American trade and employment during the difficult period of reconversion of the U.S. economy (“getting our proper share of Soviet post-war business”), a general strengthening of ties with the USSR, and finally, using the “carrot” of assistance to nudge the Soviet leadership to “work cooperatively with us on international problems in accordance with our standards.”⁴⁴ This last point will become more acute with the increasing disagreements over Soviet policy in Eastern Europe.

While continuing, with the White House’s knowledge, preliminary talks about the credit with

³⁹ Staff Meeting, December 8, 1943, WAHP, CF, Cont. 171.

⁴⁰ Meeting with U.S. Ambassador Averell Harriman and the head of the U.S. Bureau of Strategic Services, General Donovan, December 25, 1943. AVP RF, f. 06, op. 5, p. 29, d. 232, l. 92.

⁴¹ J. Deane, *The Strange Alliance*, p. 53.

⁴² See G. Marshall to Deane, February 16, 1944—NA RG 334, OSS (General), Box 18. Colonel George Haskell was appointed head of the US Moscow mission, and A. Grauer, chief of the Anglo-American department of the PGU (First Main Directorate) was to head the NKVD representation in Washington.

⁴³ *Special Envoy*, p. 294.

⁴⁴ A. Harriman to the Secretary of State, January 9, February 14, 1944, FRUS, 1944, vol. 4, p. 1034.

Molotov and Mikoyan, Harriman dispatched to Washington his thoughts on the conditions for granting the credit, at the same time asking for concrete instructions on this matter. On January 9th, he received a general go-ahead to his plan from the President and Hopkins. This dispatch for some reason was not included in the official publication of State Department documents, but within a month it was on Stalin's desk, along with Harriman's telegrams of January 7th and 9th that preceded it (it was published in *Foreign Relations*).⁴⁵ Soviet intelligence was obviously giving the credit issue special attention and somehow managed to intercept this encoded correspondence in Washington. The Soviet leadership, evidently encouraged by the American initiative, on February 1st (in the form of a memorandum from Mikoyan to Harriman) made an initial proposal for a credit of 1 billion dollars for a term of 25 years at a rate of 0.5 percent interest. Although Harriman found these terms too generous, he duly conveyed them to Washington, whereupon he received in reply Hull's instruction to "limit yourself to generalities."⁴⁶ It was not until a week later that the Ambassador received more detailed instructions, but they too provided little assistance in the matter: general support for the plan of a credit was to be linked to a final accounting of Lend-Lease and a reminder about the strict legal limitations on granting government credits to the Soviet Union, as mandated by the Johnson Act. At the same time, it was proposed that an interdepartmental group under the aegis of the State Department be created to study the issue.⁴⁷

Knowing only too well the meaning of such delays, Harriman in reply insisted on a speedy resolution of the issue and the presentation of a concrete plan to the Soviets. He wrote Hopkins that "vague promises excite Soviet suspicions whereas a precise program offered now to them but kept always within our control to suspend will be of extreme value."⁴⁸ On February 18th, Mikoyan, at Harriman's request, submitted the draft of a plan for supplies amounting to the proposed 1 billion dollars. In Washington, however, the matter came to a standstill and real negotiations on the issue of credits would not begin until the fall of 1944.

Another field to which Harriman applied his energies was the development of military cooperation proposed by the U.S. in Teheran, above all, the stationing in the USSR of U.S. Air Force bases for shuttle-flight bombings in Eastern Europe and the ensuing war with Japan. The Soviets were in no hurry to allow Allied troops on their territory; Harriman naively explained the delay by the fact that the "spirit of Tehran has not percolated to lower echelons" of the Soviet bureaucracy.⁴⁹ This did not prevent the Americans from continuing to pressure the "upper echelon." Finally, on February 2nd, at a meeting with Stalin at which he again raised the issue of shuttle-bombing, Harriman heard practical and detailed questions: how many planes would take part in the bombings? Who will service them—the Americans or Russians? What would be done about fuel, since the octane rating of Soviet petrol was not suitable for American engines? In what language would the air dispatchers communicate with the American pilots?⁵⁰ Harriman's detailed responses satisfied the leader. (Before giving the Americans the go-ahead, Stalin apparently had decided to verify personally their concept of the plan by questioning Harriman, because the draft of an affirmative response, prepared by the General Staff, was already on his desk).⁵¹ After receiving orders from the very top, the "lower echelon" moved so quickly that in four month's time everything—three airfields, technical equipment, personnel—was ready to begin the operation, which was given the code name Frantic. "We have to realize," Harriman wrote General Ira Eaker, Commander of the Allied Mediterranean Air Force units, "that the establishment within the country of armed forces of a foreign country under their own command has never before been permitted to my knowledge in the history of Russia."⁵²

But there had been no progress with the bases in the Far East. At that same February meeting with Harriman, Stalin had explained the delay as an unwillingness to provoke the Japanese before the time had come. "We cannot take part now in any operations undertaken by the Americans against Japan, because we do not have sufficient forces in the Far East," explained Stalin (this part

⁴⁵ V. Merkulov—v GKO (to Stalin, Molotov and Beria), February 11, 1944. Arkhiv SVR RF.

⁴⁶ Secretary of State to A. Harriman, February 2, 1944, FRUS, 1944, vol. 4, p. 1043.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 1046-48.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 1053.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 803.

⁵⁰ *Sovetsko-amerikanskii otnosheniia vo vremia Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny, 1941-1945: Dokumenty i materialy*, vol. 2 (Moscow, 1984), pp. 15-18.

⁵¹ Antonov to Molotov, January 1, 1944, AVP RF, f. 06, op. 6, p. 46, d. 617, ll. 5-8.

⁵² A. Harriman to I. Eaker, March 23, 1944, WAHP, CF, Cont. 172.

of the meeting's memocon has never before been disclosed). "...Come summer it will be clearer. When we have increased our troops in the Far East and re-armed our aviation, we will not be afraid of any Japanese provocations, and perhaps will initiate a provocation ourselves. But if we incite the Japanese to take active measures before we are ready for this, it may end in failure and the loss of the coast, which would be worse for us and our allies." This sounded sufficiently convincing, but to sweeten the bitter pill a bit more for the Americans the Supreme Commander adopted a highly confidential manner as he shared with Harriman for the first time some very sensitive intelligence: "...According to our information, the Japanese might quit their external line of defense that runs through Indonesia. They are building a new line of defense closer to the islands. We have information that the Japanese are transporting works and equipment from the more distant regions to the islands and Manchuria."⁵³ The Ambassador immediately conveyed this information to the President as a communication of great importance, adding for his own part that Stalin was very friendly. This was not a bad start and a few days later Harriman noted with satisfaction to Stettinius: "We are all gaining experience... Although we have constant difficulties with the Soviet bureaucracy I feel we are making slow but important progress."⁵⁴

Harriman's trip to the north to take part in the ceremony of presenting the American cruiser *The Milwaukee* to Soviet seaman passed in the same spirit of Allied solidarity. This act was undertaken by Washington as partial compensation to the Soviet Union for a share of the best ships in the captured Italian fleet, as promised in Teheran, but which the British and Americans were in no hurry to hand over to their ally.

Harriman flew to Murmansk on April 6th, accompanied by U.S. Navy Admiral Olsen and his staff, who were anxious to make use of the rare opportunity to see the Soviet Navy at close range. In addition to the customary receptions and other protocol functions, meetings for the Americans were organized with the legendary head of the Northern Shipping Waterways, I. D. Papanin, Commander of the Northern Fleet, Admiral A. G.

Golovko, and even (at Olsen's request, seconded by the Ambassador) a visit to the headquarters of the Northern Fleet on the *Polyarnoe*. In his remarks to the sailors, Harriman compared the transferral of the ship to loaning a horse that was sorely needed by a faithful friend who found himself in even greater need. "The Ambassador's remarks," the Soviet escorts recorded approvingly, "were not long, were simply worded and did not smack of the excessive flattery and sugared tone that is often typical here for the English in similar circumstances."⁵⁵ Little attending to the inevitable dinner speeches, toasts, and songs to accordion accompaniment, Harriman did not conceal that he was interested above all in practical matters: the condition of the Soviet Navy, the operations in the ports for receiving Lend-Lease cargo, the Soviet utilization of American military equipment. "During the course of his stay on the *Polyarnoe*," reported A. Timoshenko, the diplomatic agent of the NKID attached to the American delegation in Murmansk, "Harriman was not disposed to engage in aimless conversation of the 'salon' variety. He noticeably tried to separate himself from those who had accompanied him so that he could find answers to questions that interested him and he tried to familiarize himself with the North as thoroughly as possible."⁵⁶ Of particular interest to the Ambassador were the modifications that had been made to American aircraft by Soviet technicians, so that they would answer their needs—the bomber *Boston* used as a torpedo bomber and the *Aircobra* for dropping small bombs. Over lunch with the sailors the Ambassador confessed that these uses had never occurred to them when these weapons were designed, and he noted these improvements in his diary so that he could pass them on to his own military.⁵⁷ Embassy naval intelligence had also appreciated the Russian technical acumen: "Under the guise of a 'keepsake' photograph of Harriman and the Soviet and American representatives who had accompanied him," recorded Timoshenko, the vigilant diplomatic agent, "Tolly, the U.S. assistant naval attaché, photographed the aircraft with the most interesting modifications, which noticeably pleased Rear-Admiral Olsen, the naval attaché."⁵⁸

⁵³ From the transcript of the meeting of Comrade Stalin with Ambassador Harriman, February 2, 1944, AP RF, f. 45, op. 1, d. 337, l. 37-38, 33.

⁵⁴ A. Harriman to Stettinius, February 8, 1944, *U.S. Military Intelligence Reports*, vol. 2 (Soviet Union 1941-1944), edited by P. Kesaris (Bethesda, 1985), reel 20.

⁵⁵ Harriman's stay in Murmansk, April 30, 1944, AVP RF, f. 0129, op. 162, d. 72, l. 25.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, l. 21.

⁵⁷ Items of Interest to Army regarding trip to Northern Russian ports, WAHP, CF, Cont. 172.

⁵⁸ Harriman's stay in Murmansk, l. 27. In 1994 the author met with retired Admiral Tolly who remembered this episode vividly, but he denied the professional intent. However, the modifications of the aircraft indeed

In his report to the President on the trip, Harriman noted with particular satisfaction the “competence and energy” of the port operations in Murmansk and Archangel, which received up to 12,000 tons of cargo in a twenty-four-hour period, as well as the high professionalism of the Soviet sailors who quickly mastered the new ship, now called the *Murmansk*: “The cordiality with which I was received was almost embarrassing... A deep-seated gratitude for our assistance was shown by all, military and civilians alike.”⁵⁹

In turn, the Soviet representatives were greatly impressed by their distinguished American guest. In the opinion of Papanin and others, as reported to Harriman by the U.S. assistant naval attaché in Archangel, “You are the ideal type of man our Ambassador should be.” And this was not flattering exaggeration in so far as even Timoshenko concluded his report on Harriman’s trip in a key that was unusually complimentary for this genre: “The Ambassador’s competence in various questions of technical matters and equipment, as well as his simple and natural manner in conversation won over the Soviet military personnel and government representatives and many of them spoke of him as a ‘remarkable man’ and called him a ‘very bright head.’”⁶⁰

The First Frost

However, even this period of great expectations was not free of grievances on both sides. Towards the beginning of the year, the Embassy and the U.S. military mission, which was tracking, as closely as conditions allowed, actual utilization of supplies the Soviets received under Lend-Lease, came to the conclusion that the USSR was asking for more than it could realistically use in the war effort, particularly in the sector of industrial equipment. Harriman turned to Hopkins with a request to grant the Embassy authority over verifying Soviet orders and to demand from the USSR a more detailed accounting of how the American supplies were being used. In Washington there were differences of opinion: Harriman and Deane were supported by the Foreign Economic Administration, which was responsible for the Lend-Lease program as a whole, but the President’s Committee on Soviet

Protocol under Hopkins came out against a change in the current practice. Roosevelt got involved in the matter. At Hopkins’ suggestion, the President sent the Secretary of State an unambiguous memorandum: “Russia continues to be a major factor in achieving the defeat of Germany. We must therefore continue to support the USSR by providing the maximum amount of supplies which can be delivered to her ports. This is a matter of paramount importance.”⁶¹

This struggle behind the scenes did not escape the notice of Soviet intelligence, which by all appearances had quite good informants in the corridors of Washington. “The Foreign Economic Administration, having carried over Harriman’s statement that the USSR receives from Lend-Lease too many materials that are not used for war needs, presented to Hopkins a report defending that opinion,” Fitin reported to the leadership of the NKID. “Roosevelt suggested that an end be put to this nonsense and issued directives to all the ministries that the USSR is playing a major role in the war.”⁶² Harriman was forced to submit, although at a meeting in the Embassy he did not hide his irritation at the Committee on Soviet Protocol: “their way to get along with the Russians is to do everything they ask. This is not the way to get along. They are tough and expect us to be tough.”⁶³

Harriman was also troubled by the increasingly independent nature of Moscow’s unilateral actions. For example, Moscow did not wish to consult with the Allies on such questions as recognizing the Badoglio government in Italy—in the zone of U.S. and British interests. The Ambassador appealed to the Secretary of State: “We should not let the Soviets get away with this sharp practice... while the Soviets learn how to behave in the civilized world community,” so that they don’t start “playing the part of a world bully.”⁶⁴

A much more serious irritant for both sides became the question of Poland’s future. Harriman treated with understanding the Soviet leadership’s unwillingness to have dealings with the “London Poles”—from his own experience working in London he knew only too well their uncompromising anti-Soviet stance, compounded by Russophobia, and he hoped for a reorganization of the Mikolajczyk government that would be

were perfectly captured on the photographs that he showed me.

⁵⁹ A. Harriman to the President, April 14, 1944, WAHP, CF, Cont. 172.

⁶⁰ A. Harriman to the President, April 14, 1944, WAHP, CF, Cont. 172.

⁶¹ President to the Secretary of State, February 14, 1944, FRUS, 1944, vol. 4, p. 1053.

⁶² Fitin to Comrade Dekanoozov, March 14, 1944, Arkhiv SVR RF.

⁶³ *Special Envoy*, p. 310.

⁶⁴ FRUS, 1944, vol. 3, p. 1056.

acceptable to the Kremlin. He was persuaded of this even more by President Benes of Czechoslovakia, who had come to Moscow in late 1943 for the conclusion of a treaty of alliance with the USSR. The Kremlin, according to Benes who had discussed the issue with Stalin, did not intend to communize Poland and above all was interested in the recognition of the new eastern boundary of Poland along the Curzon Line, as well as a general pro-Soviet orientation in the foreign policy of the new Poland. Harriman came to believe that the “Czech model” might be the solution to the Polish problem, which would be acceptable to all parties—the USSR, its western neighbors and Poland itself. The Russians, he said at an Embassy meeting that took place on February 15, 1944, “don’t want to communize that country, but they also don’t want Poland to go back into the power of the group which is definitely anti-Soviet... He personally thought the Russians have a very good case against the Polish government there....”⁶⁵ At a meeting with Stalin on March 3rd, Harriman again raised this issue at the President’s request, in an attempt to discover the possibility of a compromise in the Soviet position. “Again, the Poles?” muttered Stalin. “Is this really the most important issue?” (That is how the Soviet transcript, not previously cited by historians, records this conversation.) Further on, Stalin sharply speaks out against the “London Poles”—those “landowners and Polish Tories, whom the people won’t even let back into Poland. They all think Russians are farm laborers [*batraki*, i.e., involuntary servants—V.P.],” he added with a note of exasperation. “The Russians must liberate Poland, but the Poles want to be given Lvov. Everybody thinks that Russians are fools.” “Harriman says,” the transcript of this conversation made by V. Berezhev, continues, “that he is not the right person to defend the London Poles. He, Harriman, spent more than two years in London and knows the London Poles rather well. But at the same time he must say that there are good people among them. Comrade Stalin makes the remark that one can find good people everywhere, even among the bushmen.” Harriman was not content to let the issue rest and asked what was the solution to this problem. “In future either the Mikolajczyk government will be changed or a new democratic government will emerge in Poland,” Stalin snapped. All of Harriman’s attempts to find out how this new government might come about, whether

⁶⁵ Memorandum of Staff Meeting, February 15, 1944, WAHP, CF, Cont. 171.

Mikolajczyk’s representatives might be part of it and so forth were met with the non-committal “that will depend on the situation” or “it’s too early to tell.” The Kremlin master spoke out more definitely regarding the British Prime Minister’s attempts at mediation: “Churchill will not be able to do anything with the Poles. The Poles are deceiving Churchill.”⁶⁶

Despite Stalin’s harsh tone, Harriman continued to maintain a cautious optimism. In a draft of a dispatch that ultimately was not sent to the President, written soon after this meeting in the Kremlin, he writes: “Stalin is basically right... There is no evidence that he is unwilling to allow an independent Poland to emerge. I urge... that we don’t allow our relationship with the Soviet government to be embroiled by the Poles.”⁶⁷

Such was Harriman’s frame of mind when he set out for Washington in May to report on developments and for briefings. He stopped in London on the way and had to make Churchill, angered by Stalin’s “ingratitude” for his mediation in the Polish question, see reason. The Prime Minister spoke of his “great achievement” of succeeding in winning over the Mikolajczyk government to recognize the Curzon Line as the temporary administrative eastern border of Poland. And “what did he get for all this? Insults from Stalin—a barbarian, etc., etc.,” Harriman records in his diary, not without irony.⁶⁸

In Washington, the Ambassador met with the President who promised to nudge Mikolajczyk at their upcoming meeting to replace Sosnowski and one or two other obstinate members of his cabinet, as well as to try to downplay the Polish question in the approaching election campaign.⁶⁹

Harriman presented a more detailed report to the State Department administration on May 10th. The general tone of his report is thoroughly optimistic: “Our relations with the Soviet government are constantly becoming more solid in spite of a number of superficial difficulties and some more fundamental ones. While cautioning against harboring illusions about “democracy in Russia,” the Ambassador at the same time emphasized that “Stalin and his government do not wish to foment revolutions along their borders or to cause disorders which would threaten

⁶⁶ Transcript of the conversation between I. V. Stalin and U.S. Ambassador Harriman, March 3, 1944, AP RF, f. 45, op. 1, d. 377, ll. 41-46.

⁶⁷ WAHP, CF, Cont. 172.

⁶⁸ Dinner with the Prime Minister at 10 Downing Street, May 2, 1944, *ibid.*

⁶⁹ Meeting and Conversation of May 17, 1944, *ibid.*

international stability.” This also applied to Poland, where the U.S. position, in Harriman’s opinion, should be “to stand on the sidelines and to make it clear to the Russians that we expect them to permit the Poles to establish a government of their own choosing, but not to deviate from the principle that the Poles must make their peace with Russia.”

Harriman confirmed that he viewed the “Czech model” to be the best of all possible in Eastern Europe, but with one significant proviso, namely, that “with the view to checking the spread of Communism” in Eastern and Central Europe, the U.S. must render assistance to the democratic governments of the countries in this region, above all, in the economic sphere.⁷⁰

Harriman’s return to Moscow coincided with the peak of Soviet-American military cooperation. On June 2, 1944, after a successful bombing mission of targets in Romania, 64 U.S. Air Force bombers landed on the Poltava airfield—the new phase of shuttle-bombings had begun, which the Americans nicknamed Frantic Joe, in honor of Stalin. While watching the well-balanced wedge formation of the silver-winged aircrafts, the reserved Harriman, as his daughter Kathleen who was with him would write home, “was moved as never before in his life.”⁷¹ Harriman himself in his dispatch to Roosevelt wrote: “All of us here, Russians and Americans alike, were thrilled to see General Eaker with his bomber force to land on Soviet bases.”⁷² In addition to the purely military aims, Frantic Joe also had political goals—to demonstrate Allied solidarity and show the Soviet people the might and friendliness of the U.S. Air Force, as well as to create a precedent for granting the Americans airbases on the Primorye Territory and in the Far East.⁷³

On June 6, 1944, the Allies landed at Normandy. Stalin, who received Harriman several days later, expressed his admiration for the Allied operation in unusually exalted tones (later expanded for his interview in *Pravda*): “The history of warfare does not know another similar enterprise in breadth of concept, grandeur of scale and skill of execution.” For a time, the American soldiers and diplomats were real heroes in

Moscow: they were hoisted aloft on the street, loaded down with presents at receptions, and treated in restaurants. “It is funny,” Kathleen Harriman wrote home, “the way the public gives us complete credit for the invasion, not the British or Canadians.”⁷⁴ And the Ambassador reported to Churchill’s wife, Clementine, that “life in Moscow is much more pleasant this summer. The sun has been shining brightly both actually and figuratively since the momentous events.”⁷⁵

The Soviet military command supported Operation Overlord by participating in the Bodyguard Plan, according to which they planned to disinform the Germans as to the time and place of the Allied landing at Normandy, as well as by mounting a powerful offensive on the Eastern front, which pinned down the Weirmacht’s primary forces. Stalin’s fulfillment of this promise made in Teheran, Harriman would later recall, was “of supreme importance in the psychology of our military... The fact that he kept his word on this convinced a number of our military leaders of the sincerity of his word, Eisenhower particularly.”⁷⁶ The Big Three’s military and strategic cooperation had reached its zenith.

Now even the situation with the Polish question still seemed reparable. Although the Kremlin on the eve of the liberation of Poland had already begun to create that same “democratic” (i.e., pro-Soviet) government to spite the London Poles, about which Stalin had hinted to Harriman in March, the leaders of the Polish National Committee made quite a good impression on the Ambassador. “They satisfied me,” Harriman reported to Washington after the first meeting with E. Osobka-Morawski and his colleagues, “that they aren’t Soviet agents and that they are anxious to get the backing and assistance not only of the Soviet government, but of the British and ourselves as well.”⁷⁷

The Kremlin’s real position was harsher than it appeared to either Roosevelt or Harriman. Although there was not talk yet of the Sovietization of Poland (the Resolution of the State Defense Committee, dated July 31, 1944, stated: “the Soviet system is not to be introduced..., the churches are not to be touched”),

⁷⁰ Minutes of the Department of State Policy Committee, May 10, 1944, NA RG 59, G. Notter Records, 1940-1945, Box 138.

⁷¹ Kathleen to Mary, June 4, 1944, WAHP, CF, Cont. 172.

⁷² A. Harriman to the President, June 2, 1944, *ibid*.

⁷³ See M. Conversino, *Fighting with the Soviets. The Failure of Operation Frantic, 1944-1945* (Lexington, 1997), p. 30.

⁷⁴ Kathleen Harriman to Mary, June 9, 1944, WAHP, CF, Cont. 172.

⁷⁵ A. Harriman to C. Churchill, July 25, 1944, WAHP, CF, Cont. 173.

⁷⁶ Comments by Harriman called to mind by Churchill’s account of the Teheran Meeting in *Closing the Ring*, WAHP, Writings, Feis File, Cont. 53.

⁷⁷ Harriman to the President and Secretary of State, June 13, 1944, WAHP, CF, Cont. 173.

the Kremlin was counting on pro-Soviet forces and an irreconcilable conflict with the Home Army and other pro-London organizations. That same Resolution of the State Defense Committee directed that “no governing bodies, including those that represent themselves as organs of the Polish émigré ‘government’ (in London) are to be recognized except the organs of the Polish National Council... Bear in mind that those persons *who represent themselves as representatives of the Polish émigré ‘government’ in London, among whom a number of Hitler’s agents have been found, should be regarded as imposters and should be dealt with as adventurers*” (the words in italics were added by Molotov for emphasis—V.P.).⁷⁸ However, in an effort to observe the “democratic” niceties and not annoy the Allies too much, Stalin was prepared to dilute the “Lublin Poles” with a few representatives of the London government. It was precisely just such a deal that he and Molotov attempted to force on Mikolajczyk’s delegation, which came to Moscow in late July for negotiations with the Soviet leadership. Mikolajczyk did not give in and his first talks with B. Bierut and his team did not yield tangible results, but he left Moscow “much more hopeful” (in the words of Harriman in his dispatch to Washington) regarding a settlement, in part by Stalin’s personal promise to airlift assistance to those taking part in the Warsaw uprising that had begun on August 1st. In his final dispatch on the results of the Soviet-Polish negotiations in Moscow (which Harriman carefully monitored through meetings with both Molotov and Mikolajczyk), he reported that “there is no doubt that the Soviet Government wants to see a settlement now”⁷⁹ on Poland by means of creating a coalition government and recommended increasing pressure on Mikolajczyk from London and Washington. Roosevelt was delighted with this “pleasant news on Soviet-Polish conversations.”⁸⁰

But just a few days later the situation with Poland changed dramatically. On August 15, 1944, Harriman received a harsh denial from Vyshinsky in response to the U.S. request to allow Allied planes to make a landing in Poltava after their

⁷⁸ Resolution of the State Defense Committee, July 31, 1944, AVP RF, f. 06, op. 6, d. 667, p. 49, l. 8. For more information on the fight against the Home Army, see *NKVD i pol’skoe podpol’e 1944-1945 (Po “Osobym papkam” Stalina)* (Moscow, 1994).

⁷⁹ FRUS, 1944, vol. 3, p. 1315.

⁸⁰ Churchill and Roosevelt, *The Complete Correspondence*, edited by W. Kimball (London, 1984), vol. 3, p. 273.

flight from Great Britain and airlifting cargo for the insurgents in Warsaw. (The Royal Air Force had begun these flights on August 9th, but they did not have sufficient fuel to return to their home airbases.) Thus the Soviet Union not only refused, despite Stalin’s promise to lend assistance to the Poles, but also was not allowing the Allies do so. Harriman and Kerr requested an immediate meeting with Molotov, but were received by the same Vyshinsky, who in response to the Ambassador’s questions and protests would merely repeat: “The Soviet government does not wish to encourage undertakings by adventurers that will be used against itself.”⁸¹ In his report on this conversation, Harriman, shocked by what had taken place, wrote to the President: “I am for the first time since coming to Moscow gravely concerned by the attitude of the Soviet government... If the position of the Soviet government is correctly reflected by Vyshinsky, its refusal is based on ruthless political considerations.”⁸² Harriman appealed to Roosevelt to send Stalin a serious warning, but the President took a wait-and-see position.

On August 17th, the ambassadors were finally received by Molotov, who by this time already knew from Antonov, the chief of the General Staff, about the disastrous situation of the English airmen who were forced to parachute out of their planes over Polish and Soviet territory after their raids on Warsaw. Nevertheless, the People’s Commissar firmly maintained the position taken by Stalin the day before in his reply to Churchill and Mikolajczyk: “The Soviet government believes the Warsaw enterprise to be a sham” and “does not wish to assume responsibility for it, including the responsibility for aircraft which will be sent to render assistance to Warsaw.”⁸³ Harriman, who had assumed the role of the Allies’ main representative, brought to bear all the arguments at his disposal, beginning with Stalin’s promise and the undermining of the position of Mikolajczyk among his colleagues to the “unnecessary deaths” of many American and British airmen and public opinion in the U.S. and England. “The refusal to assist the Poles now engaged in this battle in Warsaw will never be understood in the U.S., no matter what the mistakes of the leaders of these Poles have been,” runs the Soviet transcript of this conversation, prepared by V. Pavlov. “He, Harriman, is certain

⁸¹ Conversation between Kerr, Harriman and Vyshinsky, August 13, 1944, WAHP, CF, Cont. 173.

⁸² *Special Envoy*, p. 340.

⁸³ AVP RF, f. 06, p. 23, d. 242, l. 16.

that if Molotov were to examine thoroughly all these factors, he would reconsider his decision.” (“Harriman delivered these last words,” Pavlov adds, “in a highly agitated voice.”)⁸⁴

However, Molotov not only dispassionately dismissed all of Harriman’s arguments on Poland, but also added yet another piece of bad news, namely, the Soviet government’s desire to “return the airfields [engaged in Operation Frantic] to Soviet troops, because they were not being adequately utilized.” This unexpected communication, which sounded like a threat to link the shuttle-bombings with the Polish question, exhausted the reserves of Harriman’s patience. Despite the heavy casualties sustained by the American air detachment in Ukraine as a result of German bombings in late June, the U.S. military command was counting on making use of these airfields in the future in connection with the ensuing transfer of airbases to the Primorye. On its part, the Soviet partners in the shuttle-bombing mission believed it possible to agree to an increase in the presence of the U.S. Air Force in Ukraine to 4 airforce detachments (i.e., 2,000 crew members) and give them one more airbase.⁸⁵ Therefore, without even having concrete instructions on this point, Harriman replied with a very serious warning: “If the Americans are denied Soviet airfields, this will have catastrophic consequences for matters of cooperation between our countries...” (Pavlov again notes the Ambassador’s “agitated voice” and “irritation.”) “There were no grounds for Harriman to have been so agitated,” observed the People’s Commissar as he calmly brought the discussion to a close.⁸⁶

Harriman was indeed “absorbed by indignation,” as he wrote to General F. Anderson.⁸⁷ The reasons for such an emotional reaction apparently stem from the shock of seeing Stalin’s treachery revealed for the first time with such clarity. “The one solid faith I have had was the validity of Stalin’s word,” he writes in a dispatch to the President that went unsent. “He has now broken his promise to Mikolajczyk within three days and without any apparent cause...” The cynicism of Stalin, who just recently had accused the Polish underground of an unwillingness “to fight the Germans,” and who then later (in that same meeting with Mikolajczyk on August 9th)

expressed ostentatious sympathy for the foolish insurgents (“The Germans will simply slaughter all the Poles. It’s a pity about these Poles”⁸⁸), now displayed gloating indifference both for their extermination and for Allied appeals for assistance, all of which had shocked even the thick-skinned Harriman. The Warsaw insurrection became a moment of truth for him and forced him to view in a new light not only the methods but also the goals of Stalin’s policies. In that same draft of a dispatch to the President he writes that the Polish question, important in and of itself, might herald the same merciless policies in other quarters. This accounts for his recommendation to the White House and the State Department that “Marshal Stalin should be made to understand that if the Soviet government continues such a policy, the belief of the American public in the chances of success of postwar cooperation and of world security organization would be profoundly shaken.”⁸⁹

Neither Roosevelt nor the State Department, however, responded to Harriman’s sounding of the alarm. The U.S. Air Force command was skeptical of the effectiveness of assisting Warsaw from the air, at the same time fearful of the future for the shuttle-bombing operations (called into question by Molotov), which as the State Department instructed the Ambassador “shouldn’t in any way be allowed to be imperiled by [the Warsaw] question.” It was recommended that Harriman change his tune, because “as a result of your presentations our chief purpose has already been achieved.”⁹⁰

The Ambassador was forced to submit, although, as he wrote in reply, he found “it difficult to understand how it can be considered that our purpose has been achieved.” Hoping to influence the White House, he turned to Hopkins with the request that he be recalled to Washington for urgent consultations and laid out a new, tougher policy toward the USSR: “They have misinterpreted our generous attitude toward them as a sign of weakness and acceptance of their policies... Unless we take issue with the present policy there is every indication that the Soviet Union will become a world bully wherever their interests are involved... I am not going to propose any drastic action, but a firm but friendly quid pro

⁸⁴ Ibid., I. 18.

⁸⁵ Nikitin to Molotov, June 29, 1944, AVP RF, f. 06, op. 6, p. 46, d. 617, I. 62.

⁸⁶ AVP RF, f. 06, op. 6, p. 23, I. 29.

⁸⁷ A. Harriman to F. Anderson, August 18, 1944, WAHP, CF, Cont. 173.

⁸⁸ Transcript of I. V. Stalin’s conversation with Mikolajczyk, August 3, 1944, AVP RF, f. 06, op. 6, p. 42, d. 550, I. 11; transcript of I. V. Stalin’s conversation with Mikolajczyk, August 9, 1944, *ibid.*, I. 6.

⁸⁹ *Special Envoy*, p. 340.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 342.

quo attitude.” From this moment this formula for relations with Moscow became Harriman’s secret motto, but Hopkins advised him against coming to Washington for the time being.

The situation around Warsaw became somewhat less tense, when on September 9th—already after the crushing defeat of the insurgents’ main forces—the Soviets finally granted permission to the Allies to use the Ukrainian airfields, and on September 13th they began their own air missions to Warsaw. At the same time, the Soviet command, following instructions (as Antonov reported to Molotov⁹¹) “continued to evade” discussion of the Polish situation with the Allies. Stalin took upon himself this discussion during his meeting with Harriman and Kerr on September 23rd. First, Stalin recognized the grounds for the insurgents’ actions and spoke in detail about the problems of rendering them military assistance.⁹² “The Marshal,” Harriman reported to the President, “showed concern and understanding for the Poles in Warsaw and none of the vindictiveness previously evidenced.”

This turnaround by the great mystifier puzzled Harriman, who now was prepared to ascribe part of the blame to Molotov or the KGB for misinforming the Commander in Chief about the situation in Warsaw and the Anglo-American protests. As he would later recall, “To me nothing could excuse his outrageous denial of help for so very long. But the episode again underlined the importance of getting to Stalin directly on matters of importance.”⁹³

The settlement of the Warsaw incident and the partial rehabilitation of Stalin himself in the eyes of the Ambassador did not alter his new appraisal of the dangers lurking in Soviet policies. Moreover, the influence of Harriman’s new deputy at the Moscow Embassy, George Kennan, and his extremely gloomy analysis of the situation evidently played a role here. Convinced of the predominance of “dreams of empire” over “thoughts of international collaboration” in the Kremlin’s thinking, Kennan believed that with the opening of the second front the necessity of appeasing the West had grown weaker, which made way for the “resultant bluntness of Soviet policy,” so clearly revealed during the Warsaw insurrection. The Kremlin’s goal, continued Kennan in his analytic essay for Harriman and the

State Department, was to establish control over Eastern and Central Europe; the methods may not include full “Communization” of these countries, but they will always lead to their complete subordination to the will of Moscow. In connection with the Warsaw events, Kennan proposed that harsh retaliatory measures be taken, including the cessation of Lend-Lease.⁹⁴

Harriman did not go as far in his analysis and recommendations, but he began to have doubts about the possibility of limiting Soviet expansion by the likes of the Monroe Doctrine and an open sphere of influence, in which he had recently believed himself. As recently as September 18th, in a draft of recommendations to the State Department he had proposed determining with London the sphere of the West’s vital interests in Europe; then “we must make it plain to the Russians in practical ways and in a friendly but firm manner where this line lies... to reach an effective understanding as to how far we each can go.”⁹⁵

But only a few days later, in answering Hull’s inquiry on the tendencies of Soviet policies, Harriman was noticeably more careful regarding the viability of such a partition:

What frightens me, however, is that when a country begins to extend its influence by strong-hand methods beyond its borders under the guise of security it is difficult to see how a line can be drawn... If the policy is accepted that the Soviet Union has a right to penetrate her immediate neighbors for security, penetration of the next immediate neighbor becomes at a certain time equally logical. At the present time, I believe, they certainly expect us to give them a free hand with their Western neighbors.

Harriman further noted that instead of giving them *carte-blanche*, the United States must clearly register its disagreement with Soviet policy and in the most important instances make use of real leverage (for example, assistance in postwar reconstruction) in order to force the Kremlin “to conform to our concepts.” He ends by noting, “In such cases I am satisfied that in the last analysis Stalin will back down. We have seen him reverse

⁹¹ Antonov to Molotov, September 19, 1944, AVP RF, f. 06, op. 6, d. 6, l. 26.

⁹² *Sovetsko-amerikanskie otnosheniia...*, vol. 2, pp. 214-15.

⁹³ *Special Envoy*, p. 349.

⁹⁴ “Russia—Seven Years Later,” FRUS, 1944, vol. 4, pp. 908-9; Kennan to Ambassador, September 18, 1944, WAHP, CF, Cont. 174.

⁹⁵ Memorandum, September 18, 1944, WAHP, CF, Cont. 174.

his decision in connection with aid to the insurgents in Warsaw.⁹⁶

Thus by the fall of 1944, Harriman's general position had taken shape and he will be guided by it until the end of the war—quid pro quo, the goal of limiting Soviet expansion coupled with the still-present hope to introduce Western standards of behavior in the Soviet Union by the stick-and-carrot method.

Nevertheless, his special, personal relationship with the Kremlin remained in force. In early October, Molotov even informed the Ambassador of the Soviet government's desire to confer high honors upon him and Lord Beaverbrook in connection with the anniversary of the signing of the Moscow Protocol of 1941. Harriman politely declined, citing his government's negative view of American officials who are directly in charge of administering supplies to the USSR receiving Soviet honors.⁹⁷

In October, Harriman once again, as in 1942, had occasion to accompany Churchill during his negotiations with Stalin. The British Prime Minister had come to Moscow to bargain over the Balkans and Poland, and Roosevelt (prompted by Hopkins) decided he wanted his own observer present at these talks so that he would be fully informed and at the same time not have his hands tied by Anglo-Soviet agreements. For his part, Churchill had arranged with Roosevelt for one-on-one meetings with Stalin, since, as he wrote the President, "it is often under such conditions that the best progress is made."⁹⁸

The most progress was made precisely at the first meeting tête-à-tête between Churchill and Stalin on October 9th, namely, the famous "percentage agreement" on partitioning the spheres of influence between the two powers in the Balkans, by which Churchill sought to maintain English predominance in Greece and influence in Yugoslavia, in exchange for Soviet domination in Romania, Bulgaria and Hungary. The conversation between the two old imperialists was so cynical that even many years later the Foreign Office published only a retouched transcript, while the Soviet version remains closed to this day. Although not invited to this private meeting, Harriman still managed to piece together from talks with Churchill and Eden the gist of this

transaction "on the spheres of influence," and he immediately informed Roosevelt.

That same day, October 10th, Churchill and Stalin composed a telegram to Roosevelt regarding the progress of their negotiations. The draft of this telegram contained a single sentence on the "coordination of policies with regard to the Balkan countries that takes into account the differences in our obligations to them." The last phrase seemed to Stalin to be too transparent a hint at spheres of influence. He was ardently seconded by Harriman (present at the lunch where the discussion arose), who reminded them of the President's desire to leave all the most important questions for the consideration of the Big Three. As Harriman reported to Roosevelt, "Stalin said he was glad to hear this and, reaching behind the Prime Minister's back, shook my hand."⁹⁹ A day later, Harriman found Churchill in bed with his message to Stalin, which developed their "percentage bargain." After familiarizing himself with its contents, the Ambassador warned the Prime Minister that Roosevelt and Hull would certainly dissociate themselves from such a document. Churchill heeded the diplomat's advice and did not send the message.¹⁰⁰

Nevertheless, dividing up the Balkans on paper proved to be easier than persuading the London Poles to cooperate with Moscow. Mikolajczyk had been invited to come to Moscow. Despite the double pressure of Stalin and Churchill, he obstinately refused to accept the Curzon Line, which entailed Poland losing Lvov and the coalfields in eastern Galicia; moreover, he did not concede to the demands of the Polish National Council to be given a clear majority in the new government, which reflected the Soviet position as well, while Churchill insisted on an equal representation of "Lublin" and "London" Poles.

In separate talks with Churchill and Eden, Harriman spoke out in favor of a swift resolution of the Polish question in Moscow that would make use of the presence of the English, since time was working against the Londoners: "The longer the London Poles had control, the more the pattern of a subservient relationship to Moscow would be cemented and the deeper would be the conflict among the Poles within Poland."¹⁰¹ Churchill agreed and stepped up the pressure on

⁹⁶ *Special Envoy*, pp. 346-47.

⁹⁷ Conversation with Molotov, October 4, 1944, WAHP, CF, Cont. 174.

⁹⁸ Roosevelt-Churchill, *The Complete Correspondence*, vol. 3, p. 345.

⁹⁹ *Special Envoy*, p. 357.

¹⁰⁰ He published it later in his memoirs as an "authentic account of my thought." (W. Churchill, *Triumph and Tragedy*, vol. 6, p. 231.

¹⁰¹ Conversation with Churchill and Eden, October 16, 1944, WAHP, CF, Cont. 174.

Mikolajczyk: “Unless you accept the frontier, you are out of business forever! The Russians will sweep through your country, and your people will be liquidated.”¹⁰²

In his meeting with Mikolajczyk, Stalin acted much more subtly. While masterfully noting the Pole’s legal arguments regarding the rights to western Ukraine from time immemorial (“legally all of Poland belonged to Russia until the last world war”), he at the same time tried to calm his interlocutor with his vision of Poland’s future as a democratic and even “capitalist” state.¹⁰³ Mikolajczyk, however, did not yield either to promises or threats and merely agreed to the continuation of negotiations.

The main outcome for Harriman was that with Churchill’s support he and General Deane had finally received answers from Stalin to questions that had troubled the Americans regarding the USSR’s entry into the war with Japan. Stalin pledged to begin the war with Japan within three months after Germany’s surrender, explaining that it would require that much time to transport the necessary supplies via the Trans-Siberian railroad. He also stated that “it would be necessary to clarify the political aspects of the war with Japan. The Soviet Union must know what it will be fighting for.” The Americans were also pleased that Stalin confirmed the Soviet Union’s willingness to grant the U.S. access to airfields in the Primorye and the port of Petropavlovsk-Kamchatksky. On October 16th, Stalin presented Harriman with the Soviet request for supplies in exchange for the offensive on Japan, totaling approximately 1 billion dollars.¹⁰⁴ The second of Harriman’s long-term missions was nearing its resolution.

Churchill’s visit passed under conditions of Allied solidarity. Stalin showed the Prime Minister the maximum amount of attention: he appeared with him in the government box in the Bolshoi Theater (where, according to Kathleen Harriman, they were greeted with thunderous applause); for the first time ever Stalin attended a dinner at the British Embassy; and at the end of the visit he saw his honored guest off at the airport. Present at almost all of the negotiations between the two leaders, Harriman once again felt like a participant

in great events, and thought only of being in the company of the powerful of this world. Many years later, George Kennan would recall with a sense of injury how he had waited for several hours for that same dinner at the British Embassy to end so that he might at least present his wife (the Embassy’s “first lady” after all) to Churchill and Stalin, but Harriman was so preoccupied by his proximity to the leaders that he walked by with them and did not even notice his deputy.¹⁰⁵

The Ambassador’s sense of self-importance was no secret to his other colleagues as well, including the British Ambassador, Sir Archibald Kerr. It was during this same period that Soviet intelligence intercepted his perceptive and ironic appraisal of Harriman, which, as I have managed to establish, was contained in the Ambassador’s annual report on his colleagues in the Moscow diplomatic corps. As Kerr noted in his report, Harriman “puts his whole heart,” into his mission, “and by no means in vain. But the putting of it gives the inescapable impression that he is always on the make and evokes memories of the late Theodore Roosevelt, of whom it was said that he liked to be the baby at the christening, the bride at the wedding and the corpse at the funeral. Mr. Harriman has the same likings and they lead him into ways that it is sometimes embarrassing to watch. Thus he seems for ever to be troubled by the importance of being important (he must, as it were, always have a front seat) and by the fear that he might miss something of consequence and so a chance that might profit him.”¹⁰⁶

Immediately following Churchill’s departure, Harriman set off for Washington to report to the President. He saw Roosevelt five times, including two private lunch meetings (private save the President’s nephews and his dogs). They managed to discuss all the major issues of American-Soviet relations. Harriman informed the President in detail on the negotiations between Stalin and Churchill on the Balkans, but was to learn that “the President consistently shows very little interest in Eastern European matters except as they affect sentiment in America.”

Poland proved to be the exception and Harriman was alarmed to see that in an attempt to untie the Lvov knot the President happened upon such “fantastic ideas” as declaring Lvov to be an

¹⁰² S. Mikolajczyk, *The Rape of Poland* (New York, 1948), p. 98.

¹⁰³ Transcript of I. V. Stalin’s meeting with Mikolajczyk, October 18, 1944, AVP RF, f. 06, op. 6, p. 42, d. 555, ll. 17, 19.

¹⁰⁴ Meeting with U.S. Ambassador A. Harriman, October 16, 1944, AP RF, f. 45, op. 1, d. 282, ll. 45, 48.

¹⁰⁵ Transcript of a conversation with George Kennan on March 8, 1995.

¹⁰⁶ Archibald Clark Kerr to A. Bevin, August 29, 1945, *British Documents on Foreign Affairs*, part 3, series A, vol. 6 (University Publications of America, 1997), p. 305; Arkhiv SVR RF.

open Polish city on the territory of Soviet Ukraine, or conducting a plebiscite on its status ten years after the war's end, or inviting Roosevelt to assume the role of arbiter in resolving the border disputes between Poland and the USSR. As Harriman recorded in his notes on these conversations, the President "has no conception that they have a vital interest in their own manner on their own terms. They will never leave them to the President or anyone else to arbitrate." In any event, Harriman managed to persuade the President of Stalin's determination to resolve the issue of Poland's border without waiting for arbitration or plebiscites. The President answered that he would not raise objections to the Curzon Line, provided the Poles, Russians and British would agree, but that he was prepared to put in a word to Stalin about Lvov. The Ambassador's warnings about the danger of pro-Soviet puppet regimes being set up in Eastern Europe did not make much of an impression on Roosevelt, who back in May had disconcerted Harriman by his acknowledgment "that he didn't care whether the countries bordering Russia became communized."¹⁰⁷

The President was much more passionate in his discussions with Harriman about the situation in the Far East. He emphasized that "the defeat of Japan without the aid of Russia would be extremely difficult and costly," and authorized Harriman to find out what political price Stalin had set for the USSR's entry into the war. Harriman answered that he did not foresee any particular surprises here—the discussion would likely center on the repeal of the conditions of the Portsmouth Treaty of 1905, on ports and free access to transit on the China-Manchuria railways. The biggest difficulties with the USSR, the Ambassador added, would arise in connection with the political aspects of the Chinese settlement. Roosevelt, however, was optimistic here as well, believing that the goals of the USSR and the U.S. in China in many respects were similar: the unification of China and the liberalization of its regime.

The President showed a lot of interest in the next meeting with Stalin, and instructed Harriman to try to organize it early in the coming year somewhat more removed from Soviet shores.¹⁰⁸

In his presentation to a meeting of State Department officials, Harriman found a more

rewarding audience for his recommendations on Eastern Europe. "The first line of defense" against the Kremlin's foreign policy, he explained, was the cooperation with the U.S. and Great Britain that would be necessary for the restoration and development of the Soviet economy. The second line was "to ensure that the states along their borders shall not unite with foreign aggressors." This line, Harriman elaborated, could easily turn "imperialist" by installing political regimes on the Soviet model in Eastern Europe, but timely interference on the part of the U.S. could avert the transformation of this tendency, not yet firmly consolidated, into a routine mode of behavior. "Our basic weapon should not be the threat to withhold economic assistance but the threat to refrain from cooperation in the maintenance of general security."¹⁰⁹

On his flight back to Moscow, Harriman stopped over in London to continue negotiations with Mikolajczyk, but the latter informed him of his resignation, which had been brought about by his inability to influence his cabinet to accept the Soviet conditions. The departure of Mikolajczyk even further complicated the resolution of the Polish problem; meanwhile, in December, Stalin had warned the Allies of the Soviet Union's forthcoming recognition of the Provisional Government in Poland, which took place on January 5th, despite protests from Roosevelt and Churchill.

On December 14th, Harriman secured an interview with Stalin in order to receive an answer regarding Soviet claims on Japan. Stalin brought in a large map from an adjoining room and showed him what was involved: the return of southern Sakhalin and the Kuriles to the Soviet Union, a lease on Port Arthur and Dairen, along with the adjacent territory, as well as the railroads in Manchuria. In the course of answering the Ambassador's questions, Stalin confirmed the USSR's consent to maintaining the status quo in Mongolia and the observance of the sovereign rights of China and Manchuria. This coincided with the Embassy's expectations, apart from the item of Port Arthur, which the Americans wanted to use as a buttress in their "open door" policy in Manchuria. Harriman, therefore, tried to dispute this point, reminding Stalin that in Teheran Roosevelt had spoken of his wish that this port be open to all sides. "This can be discussed," Stalin

¹⁰⁷ Notes on the Conversations with the President, May 1944, WAHP, CF, Cont. 175.

¹⁰⁸ Memorandum of Conversations with the President during the Trip to Washington, October 21-November 19, 1944, WAHP, CF, Cont. 175.

¹⁰⁹ Remarks by Mr. Harriman, Minutes, Department of State Policy Committee, October 25, 1944, NA, RG 59, G. Notter, Records relating to Miscellaneous Policy Committees, Box 138.

agreed evasively.¹¹⁰ Not long before this meeting the U.S. had approved the Soviet request for Lend-Lease deliveries in the Far East. The USSR's long-awaited entry into the war with Japan was becoming a reality.

Early in the new year of 1945, another of Harriman's missions—postwar credits for the USSR—got an unexpected boost. This was preceded by three months of negotiation in Washington and arduous interdepartmental coordination in Moscow. The American plan for a credit agreement was presented to Stepanov, the deputy of the People's Commissar for Foreign Trade, on September 8, 1944, and with minor reservations was deemed "completely acceptable" by both the Commissariats for Foreign Trade and Foreign Affairs.¹¹¹ However, on September 21st at a meeting with Molotov, N. A. Voznesensky, the chairman of the State Planning Commission, criticized the plan, declaring (according to notes taken by A. I. Mikoyan) that "the proposed American credit is not to our advantage." Mikoyan asked Molotov to obtain from Voznesensky his objections in writing, but the People's Commissar deflected this proposal with a resolution addressed to Mikoyan, Voznesensky, Beria and Malenkov: "In my opinion, Comrade Mikoyan should not take offense at criticism..."¹¹² Further agreements and adjustments followed, as a result of which toward the end of September the Foreign Trade Commissariat had prepared a new plan that stipulated (evidently in response to the criticism from Gosplan) an approximate total of 920 million dollars of credit (provided the war ended by April 1, 1945, and taking into account the Lend-Lease deliveries of manufacturing equipment, as stipulated by the 4th Protocol). On the basis of this the NKID prepared a response to the Americans, which was drawn up using a politely obliging tone that emphasized the enormous problems the USSR would face in its postwar reconstruction and that requested an allocation of 1 billion dollars in 1945, and another 2 billion in 1946-47. The corresponding plan of the State Defense Committee's Resolution "On the Credit

Agreement with the U.S." was approved by the Politburo on December 5, 1944.¹¹³ The subsequent fate of this document has not yet been traced in the archives, so it is difficult to say how a month later it had turned into a demand for 6 billion dollars, still couched in terms of doing the Americans a favor: "In light of frequent statements made by U.S. representatives regarding the desirability of receiving large Soviet orders for the transition and war periods, the Government of the USSR deems it possible to supply orders on a long-term credit basis in the amount of 6 billion dollars." That is the preamble to the Soviet government's Memorandum, delivered to Harriman by Molotov on January 4th. The concrete conditions of the credit to be granted that follow in this document differ in some respects from the terms earlier agreed upon (for example, the percentage rate was reduced from 2 3/8 percent to 2 1/4 percent, and the discount on prices for war-time contracts was set at a rate of 20 percent instead of 5 percent.¹¹⁴

Nevertheless, after recovering from Molotov's demands, which the Ambassador characterized as "unconditional," Harriman recommended that the State Department seriously consider the proposal and "entirely disregard the unconventional character of the document and the unreasonableness of its terms." As before, Harriman did not call into question the USSR's enormous interest in receiving the credit (which evidently the unduly insulting tone was meant to conceal) and suggested that it be tied to "their behavior in international matters."¹¹⁵ The State Department agreed with this approach, but decided to save this as leverage in the future "for use in connection with the many other political and economic problems which will arise between our two countries."¹¹⁶ Roosevelt, despite Harriman's reminders, also decided not to raise the question of credits at the upcoming conference in Yalta. As Roosevelt explained to Secretary of the Treasury, Henry Morgenthau, Jr., who had come out against using the credit for political means, "I think it is very important that we hold this back and don't give them any promises of finance until we get what we want."¹¹⁷

¹¹⁰ FRUS, The Conferences at Malta and Yalta, 1945 (Washington, D.C., 1955), p. 378; *Sovetsko-amerikanskie otnosheniia...*, vol. 2, p. 273.

¹¹¹ Experts in the Foreign Affairs Ministry found that the proposed conditions were "without doubt more advantageous than the conditions of other credit agreements concluded by the USSR" (Gerashchenko, Arkad'ev to Molotov, September 20, 1944, AVP RF, f. 06, op. 6, p. 18, d. 178, ll. 38-41.

¹¹² Mikoian to Stalin, Molotov, November 13, 1944, *ibid.*, ll. 17-21.

¹¹³ Molotov, Mikoian, Beria, Malenkov, Voznesenskii to Stalin, December 5, 1944, AP RF, f. 3, op. 66, d. 295, ll. 197-200, 201-3.

¹¹⁴ AVP RF, f. 06, op. 7, p. 45, d. 703, l. 3.

¹¹⁵ FRUS, The Conferences at Malta and Yalta, p. 313.

¹¹⁶ FRUS, 1945, vol. 5, p. 966.

¹¹⁷ *Morgenthau Diaries: Years of War, 1941-1945*, edited by J. Blum (Boston, 1967), vol. 3, p. 305.

In the course of the preparations for the Yalta Conference, it fell to Harriman's lot, as is customary with ambassadors, to arrange a number of organizational and technical issues—everything from coming to an agreement on the agenda to buying (at Roosevelt's request) some "wonderful Russian champagne" and seeing to the construction of special ramps to accommodate the President's wheelchair at the airfield and all the conference's major locations.¹¹⁸

In late January, Harriman approached I. Maisky, who was responsible for preparing the USSR's reparations program, to find out about the preparations for the Yalta Conference. Harriman, Maisky reported to Molotov, was "particularly interested" in the sum total of reparations and the number of German workers to be removed to the USSR. The deputy of the People's Commissar "demurred" from naming exact figures, but "gave Harriman to understand that it was a matter of millions of people. That did not surprise him and did not elicit any negative reaction," Maisky was pleased to report. "On the contrary, he was of the opinion that the utilization of German labor in the USSR might greatly help to ease unemployment in postwar Germany." Harriman also supported the Soviet plans to limit heavy industry in Germany to purely domestic needs: Germany, he said, can satisfy its export requirements through agriculture and light industry. "Harriman later asked about what would be done with the workers who would be out of work as a result of the reductions in heavy industry," but before Maisky had managed to deal with the difficulty that had arisen, Harriman "there and then interrupted himself and with an obvious sigh of relief said, 'Well, of course, you will be taking a large number of unemployed German workers to the Soviet Union for this initial period, and later on everything will gradually become settled.'" "In conclusion," Maisky reported, "Harriman remarked that the solution to the reparations issue in the formulation that we have given it seems less problematic than he had earlier thought."¹¹⁹

In the way of preparations for Yalta, Harriman also had an interesting conversation with P. Sudoplatov, a representative from Soviet intelligence, concerning security and surveillance of the Western allies. The intelligence officer invited Harriman to the Aragvi restaurant and, after having no success extracting any useful information from his guest, he decided to

intimidate the Ambassador by hinting at compromising information the "organs" (i.e., NKVD) supposedly had regarding the Ambassador's daughter, Kathleen. As a matter of fact, the Lyubyanka did not have any such material (as counter-intelligence agents who worked the U.S. Embassy later admitted), although on more than one occasion they had "introduced" her to handsome young "pilots" and "sailors."¹²⁰ Sudoplatov's "alarm" most probably was meant for Kathleen herself—"a perceptive and sociable" woman, who annoyed Soviet counter-intelligence with her movements in the highest ranking circles, where she (so it was believed) had access to very valuable information.¹²¹ Harriman acted as though he had not understood what Sudoplatov was talking about and soon afterwards left for Yalta, accompanied by Kathleen.

The minutes of the Yalta Conference do not show traces of Harriman's active involvement in the debates of the "Big Three." He played, however, an important role behind the scenes in preparing the agreement on the USSR's entry into the war with Japan, for which he was Roosevelt's main confidant. In a meeting with Roosevelt on February 8th, Stalin outlined the Soviet maximum program on the Far East, which the Americans already knew from Harriman's December dispatches. Roosevelt spoke out in favor of making Dairen and Port Arthur free ports and for joint Sino-Soviet control of the railroads in Manchuria (instead of leasing them to the Soviet Union). The President also emphasized the importance of obtaining the Chinese government's assent to these understandings. On February 10th, Harriman discussed these amendments at a meeting with Molotov, who proved to be compliant with the majority of the American proposals. On that same day another meeting took place between Stalin and Roosevelt, with Harriman the only other participant, at which the leaders reached an agreement on the issue, which was to be fixed the next day in a secret agreement. It was so secret that Harriman and the heads of the Joint Chiefs of Staff were the only ones to know about it in the American delegation. Harriman thought the Soviet concessions insufficient and told the President that he did not like the vague proviso regarding the "pre-eminent interests" of the USSR in Dairen and in the administration of the railroad in Manchuria, as well as the firmness of the pledge that all these

¹¹⁸ AVP RF, f. 06, op. 7a, p. 57, d. 3, ll. 28-29.

¹¹⁹ Conversation with Harriman, January 20, 1945 (from Maisky's diary), *ibid.*, ll. 71-78.

¹²⁰ Author's conversation with Kathleen Mortimer (née Harriman), July, 11, 1995.

¹²¹ Author's conversation with General S. Kondrashov, May 27, 1999.

requirements “shall be unquestionably fulfilled after Japan has been defeated.”¹²² Roosevelt, however, preferred not to engage in further wrangling on this issue. The Joint Chiefs of Staff (Marshall, King and Leahy) also did not express any objections, leaving Harriman the sole opponent (but the Ambassador’s dissatisfaction with the Yalta agreements on the Far East will surface again).

Another issue on which Harriman made attempts in Yalta to dispute the Soviet position was Poland. At a meeting of the three foreign ministers on February 9th, disagreements once again broke out in connection with the Soviet draft of a declaration that made provision for forming a new Polish cabinet from the constituency of the Provincial Government. Harriman, supported by Stettinius and Eden, insisted on the American phrasing (“and from other democratic elements within Poland and beyond her borders”), but Molotov just as stubbornly defended his plan. As a result, after further discussions at the ministerial level and the Big Three, a compromise formulation was adopted, which stated that the “currently functioning Provisional Government in Poland must be reorganized on a broader democratic basis by the inclusion of democratic figures in Poland as well as Poles from abroad.”¹²³ The compromise worked more to the advantage of the Soviet position, since it did not specify either the numbers or individual parameters of the “projected reorganization” and made it possible to keep these to a minimum. It was no accident that Molotov’s take on the Yalta proceedings for Soviet ambassadors emphasized that “the foundation” for the declaration on Poland had been “laid by our proposals.”¹²⁴ Harriman would later reproach Roosevelt for the vagueness that had been allowed, the consequences of which he will soon confront as a member of the Allied commission on the formation of the new Polish government.

From Yalta to Potsdam

The Embassy delegation returned to Moscow with mixed emotions. The prevailing wisdom held that the “Yalta honeymoon” would not last long: the optimists aboard the plane made bets with the pessimists, like Bohlen, who believed that it was a

matter of days and weeks, not months.¹²⁵ The pessimists proved to be right. The ink on the Yalta “Declaration on a Liberated Europe” did not have time to dry before arguments broke out among the Allies about violations of the agreement. Stalin’s final words to Molotov regarding this document (“We can fulfill it in our own way; the main thing is the alignment of forces”)¹²⁶ were first tested in Rumania. Vyshinsky’s infamous behavior at his audience with King Michael in late February, which he concluded by slamming the door and walking out, followed by the subsequent hasty replacement of Radescu’s cabinet with the pro-Soviet government of Petru Groza strongly resonated in Washington and London. “In regard to the Rumanian situation,” Roosevelt wrote Churchill on March 11th, “Averell has taken up and is taking up again the whole question with Molotov invoking the Declaration on Liberated Europe..., but... Rumania is not a good place for a test case.”¹²⁷

A true “test case” developed around the Polish question and one of the primary diplomatic testing grounds of this fight became the Moscow tripartite commission (Molotov, Harriman, Kerr), created by a resolution of the Yalta Conference. Although the commission was designed to play the role of neutral mediator and arbiter among the various Polish factions, in actual fact both sides—the Soviets and the Anglo-Americans—worked at pushing for “their own” candidates to be included in the future government of Poland. On the Soviet side this task had already been clearly formulated in Vyshinsky’s proposals on the Polish question, as reported to Molotov on February 16th, which provided for assigning to the other “democratic forces” only five places out of twenty, submitting all candidates to Bierut and his associates for their approval, and from the very beginning discussion of all candidates by the commission would be conducted with the participation of Bierut, Osubka-Morawski and Rola-Zymierski. No less eloquent are the “remarks by Comrade V. M. Molotov,” added in pencil to Vyshinsky’s note: “Poland—a big deal! But we do not know how the governments of Belgium, France, Greece, etc., are organized. We have not been asked, although we do not say that we like one or another of these governments. We have not been informed, since

¹²² FRUS, Conferences at Malta and Yalta, p. 984.

¹²³ *Sovetskii Soiuz na mezhdunarodnykh konferentsiakh perioda Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny 1941-1945*, vol. 4, Krymskaia konferentsiia (February 4-11, 1945). Sbornik dokumentov (Moscow, 1984), pp. 254-55.

¹²⁴ AP RF, f. 3, op. 63, d. 225, l. 117.

¹²⁵ Transcript of the author’s interview with Kathleen Mortimer (née Harriman), July 11, 1995.

¹²⁶ F. Chuev, *Molotov: poludnerzhavnyi vlastelin* (Moscow, 1999), p. 94

¹²⁷ Roosevelt-Churchill, *The Complete Correspondence*, vol. 3, p. 562.

this is the *zone of operations* of Anglo-American troops” (Molotov’s italics—V.P.).¹²⁸

This heartfelt cry on the part of the Commissar of Foreign Affairs (it is later repeated in more diplomatic tones by Stalin in his message to Churchill, dated April 24th) clearly shows that the Kremlin sincerely believed that interference by the Anglo-Saxons in Polish affairs was a violation of an unwritten rule of Allied relations and viewed their Yalta concessions on Poland almost as a favor to the Americans. And if that was the case, it was imperative to keep the practical consequences to a minimum, since the Yalta formulas had made that possible. Molotov, as Harriman reported to Washington, had seized upon the Russian translation of the corresponding point in the Yalta documents, which stated that the Commission must “consult in Moscow in the first instance with members of the present Provisional Government and with other Polish democratic leaders,” whereas the words “in the first instance” in the English version referred to Moscow as the place of conducting the first round of consultations. Although officially the Anglo-Saxons insisted on the necessity of a qualitative reform of the government’s composition, the Americans on the quiet acknowledged (as Roosevelt wrote to Churchill on March 29th) that “we placed as clearly shown in the agreement, somewhat more emphasis on the Lublin Poles than on the other two groups.”¹²⁹ That is why Harriman and Kerr found it difficult to oppose the iron insistence of Stalin and Molotov that “their Poles” should be the basis for the “reorganized government.” “Otherwise,” as Molotov argued to the Commission, “it wouldn’t be a reorganization of the Government, but its liquidation.”¹³⁰

Neither the persistent objections raised by the Western diplomats, nor the protests of Roosevelt and Churchill in dispatches to Stalin had any effect; in reply Stalin accused Harriman and Kerr of deviating from the Yalta agreements and only agreed “to ask” the Provisional Government to consider Mikolajczyk’s candidacy, provided that he declare his support for the Yalta resolutions. The only way “Poland might be saved from complete Soviet domination,” as Harriman summed up the situation in his telegram to the Secretary of State, April 7th, would be “to make arrangements for a few leaders of the Peasant and Socialist parties to take an active part in the

Government.”¹³¹ The NKID had also received reports from sources in Polish circles, citing journalists that associated with the U.S. Ambassador, that there had been “a change in Harriman’s position” which now favored acknowledging the possibility of “merely expanding the membership of the Warsaw government.”¹³² Further conflict developed around the list of people to be invited to Moscow for consultations. The “Warsaw list” had been drawn up by Bierut & Co. and was subsequently approved in Moscow, while the Anglo-American list was composed by Mikolajczyk’s group in London, and had been then reshuffled by the State Department and the Foreign Office.¹³³ The Soviets for all practical purposes did not conceal the authorship of their proposals, while the Allies tried to keep their sources secret. The two lists did not overlap (with the sole exception of Kutzeba), and therefore were mutually unacceptable.

The following shows how one and the same candidate figures in the internal evaluations of the Soviets and the Allies (the official British characterization is given in parentheses): Cardinal A. Sapięha—“a profoundly reactionary person of the NDK-fascist school, boundlessly devoted to the Vatican, an enemy of democracy... Absolutely unacceptable for the negotiations” (“a well-known and well-respected figure, whose authority is particularly great among that part of the population which is predominantly Catholic”); Z. Zaremba—“Members of the PPR characterize Zaremba as a sworn enemy of the USSR and the unity of the worker’s movement. His support for concord and a coalition government is just talk. His candidacy... is absolutely unacceptable” (“he enjoys significant influence among the socialists... He proved his worth in the struggle against the German occupation”). Moscow did not have a better opinion of Mikolajczyk himself, whom Washington and London considered to be an essential participant in the new government and its No. 1 candidate: “...Mikolajczyk is clearly anti-Soviet. His negotiations with the Polish National Committee in Moscow served as a screen for Polish reactionaries... Correspondence we have intercepted between Mikolajczyk and the leaders

¹²⁸ AVP RF, f. 06, op. 7, p. 39, d. 588, ll. 2, 1.

¹²⁹ Roosevelt-Churchill, vol. 3, p. 593.

¹³⁰ The Fifth Session of the Polish Commission, March 23, 1945—WAHP, CF, Cont. 178.

¹³¹ A. Harriman to the Secretary of State, April 7, 1945—WAHP, CF, Cont. 178.

¹³² Transcript of a telephone conversation with Polish Ambassador Modzelewski, March 12, 1945 (from Zorin’s diary), AVP, RF, f. 07, op. 10, p. 21, d. 304, l. 18.

¹³³ To V. M. Molotov from Lebedev (no date), AVP RF, f. 06, op. 7, p. 39, d. 588, ll. 6-11; Eden to Kerr, February 24, 1945, WAHP, CF, Cont. 177.

of the Home Army show him to be a vehement enemy of the USSR.”¹³⁴

Another crisis in Allied relations in connection with the Berne incident broke out on the background of this tightening of the Polish knot. Harriman’s role in this well-known but still controversial story about U.S. intelligence’s secret contacts in Berne with Nazi representatives in regard to German’s unconditional surrender in Italy proved to be an altogether important one. After receiving an inquiry from Molotov on March 12th requesting the presence of Soviet representatives in these contacts, Harriman first recommended to Washington that it decline on the grounds that Berne was a question of preliminary contacts regarding purely military matters. “Under similar circumstances the Soviet Government,” the Ambassador added vindictively, “would not allow our officers to participate. He [Harriman] further considers that our agreement to the Russians going to Berne would be considered by the Soviets as a sign of weakness and would lead to more untenable demands from the Russians.” The Ambassador’s argument formed the basis of the position of the Combined Chiefs of Staff,¹³⁵ and later that of Roosevelt himself, who feared that a Soviet presence in Berne would dispel the Germans’ desire to surrender; moreover, he considered Italy to lie in the sphere of Western influence in which the deciding word should be made by the Anglo-Americans.¹³⁶

Harriman was the first to respond to Molotov’s indignant protests delivered to him on March 16th, which called the American refusal “completely unexpected and incomprehensible from the point of view of the Allied relations between our countries” and he demanded a halt to the negotiations.¹³⁷ “The arrogant language of Molotov’s letter,” the Ambassador remarked, “brings out into the open a domineering attitude toward the United States which we have before only suspected.”¹³⁸ Later that same day he sent a telegram outlining his thoughts on the possible motives for such a “strong” reaction on the part of the Soviets. The Ambassador wrote that it was

entirely possible that the Russians didn’t believe the Americans or that “they may be fearful or have information that... there may be other groups of Germans who are considering surrendering to us with a view of protecting themselves.”¹³⁹

The Ambassador was close to the truth. The Soviets had grounds for not trusting the Allies on this issue, as they had acquired a great deal of information on the proceedings in Berne and other secret Allied contacts with the Germans, including various intermediaries. Agents and informers of Soviet intelligence in London, Paris and the capitals of the neutral states were regularly reporting “peace feelers” on the part of the German secret service with the aim of attaining separate agreements with the Western Allies on the last stage of the war. Thus in early April, Merkulov, head of the NKGB, reported to Molotov that “according to information we have from Polish émigré circles in London, the German command has supposedly come to an understanding through Burchardt [the President of the International Red Cross—V.P.] with the English and Americans that all of the tank and mechanized units will be removed from the Western front and transferred to the Eastern front until the Allies occupy the remainder of Germany.”¹⁴⁰ Naturally, this sort of information, given the Soviet’s usual suspiciousness of their Western partners and the heightened state of tension occasioned by the final stages of an exhausting war, created a negative background in the Kremlin for dealing with the Berne incident. The Kremlin became convinced (as Molotov wrote in reply to assurances of the Anglo-Americans) that negotiations with the Germans were being carried on “behind the back of the Soviet Union which had borne the brunt of the war against Germany.”¹⁴¹

A few days later an exchange of communications at the highest levels led to mutual recriminations between Roosevelt and Stalin, the harshest exchanged by the two throughout the entire war period. However, certain new details that shed light on the sharpness of the Soviet reaction are not as well known. The examination of Stalin’s archive shows that the key dispatch, dated April 3rd (perceived by Harriman and the White House to be the most offensive), from beginning to end was penned by Stalin himself, in stark contrast to the overwhelming majority of

¹³⁴ Lebedev to Molotov, March 3, 1945, AVP RF, f. 06, op. 7, p. 39, d. 588, ll. 15-16; Leading Polish Personalities Likely to Cooperate with the Russians (received from Clark Kerr), WAHP, CF, Cont. 177.

¹³⁵ Memorandum by the U.S. Chiefs of Staff to the Combined Chiefs of Staff, March 13, 1945, FRUS, 1945, vol. 3, pp. 727-28.

¹³⁶ Roosevelt-Churchill, vol. 3, p. 586.

¹³⁷ *Sovetsko-amerikanskie otnosheniia*, vol. 2, pp. 332-33.

¹³⁸ FRUS, 1945, vol. 3, p. 733.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁰ Merkulov to Molotov, April 11, 1945, AVP RF, f. 06, op. 7, p. 14, d. 138, l. 25.

¹⁴¹ *Sovetsko-amerikanskie otnosheniia*, vol. 2, p. 87.

other dispatches to Roosevelt, composed on the basis of Molotov's preliminary drafts. Moreover, at the last moment Stalin introduced two additions into the typewritten text of the dispatch (they are indicated by italics), which raised the stakes of the "Berne incident" to the maximum:

It is clear that this situation cannot by any means serve the cause of *maintaining* and strengthening trust between our countries... I personally and my colleagues under no circumstances would have taken such a *risky* step, because we understand that a fleeting advantage, no matter what it is, pales before the advantage based on *maintaining* [Stalin's italics-VP] and strengthening trust among Allies.¹⁴²

The famous decision not to send Molotov to the opening of the founding conference of the United Nations in San Francisco, made during the height of the "Berne crisis," it seems, was directly connected. The matter was not simply limited to the substitution of Gromyko for Molotov, as it is usually interpreted in works on the subject. In accordance with the Resolution of the Politburo on March 13th (i.e., before the beginning of the Berne incident) the Soviet delegation that was to travel to San Francisco was to be an unusually representative one, as evidenced by the participation of A. Zhdanov and other Party and government leaders, which apparently was meant to emphasize the USSR's special role in the founding of the United Nations, as well as the great importance the Kremlin attached to the launch of this international organization. Only a little more than a week later, however, this decision was revised by sharply lowering the level and reducing the numbers of the Soviet delegates. What was to have been a stately and imposing representation had become merely a working-level delegation.¹⁴³ This could hardly have come as a result of Molotov's "very busy schedule" during the session of the Supreme Soviet, as the official version stated in explanation to the disappointed Allies.

Apart from the Polish question and the Berne incident, significant difficulties arose in connection with the realization of the Yalta agreement on the exchange of prisoners of war.

The Americans, accustomed to protecting their citizens, could not understand the apathetic and disdainful attitude of the Soviets to the Allied military personnel liberated from the Germans. The matter was complicated by the fact that the majority of the recent American prisoners found themselves on Polish territory and the Soviet command did not want to allow U.S. representatives access and denied these requests on various pretexts. American officers who by some miracle had made their way to Moscow told Deane and Harriman about their ordeals and the difficult conditions in the Soviet filtration camps. Harriman and Deane bombarded the NKID and the General Staff in vain with requests and offers of assistance. "I am outraged," the Ambassador telegraphed to Roosevelt on March 14th, after receiving from Molotov the explanation that it was not Moscow, but the "Provisional Government of Poland that objects to the admittance of American representatives." "In my opinion, the Soviet government is trying to use our prisoners of war as a truncheon to increase the prestige of the Polish government by forcing us to appeal to it." After receiving Harriman's report, Roosevelt adopted a more intense tone in his discussion of this problem in his correspondence with Stalin.¹⁴⁴

Other smaller sources of irritation also began to amass: the unwillingness of the Soviets to admit U.S. representatives into the liberated territories of other countries in Eastern Europe, the delay in settling the issue of granting the Americans airbases in the Primorye, a secret delivery of Lend-Lease supplies to the Provisional Government in Poland and the USSR's other newly acquired allies. The tone of the recommendations of the U.S. Embassy and military mission in Moscow became harsher and harsher—right up to proposals to curtail Lend-Lease deliveries.¹⁴⁵

Harriman carefully tried to convey to his Soviet colleagues this sense of growing irritation with Moscow's conduct, putting the blame on the U.S. domestic situation. Thus at a tea given in honor of Clementine Churchill by Molotov's wife, P. S. Zhemchuzhina, the Ambassador among other things confided to I. M. Maisky about "certain misgivings": "The President is very distressed and disappointed. The press and U.S. public opinion clearly evidence a growing irritation and discontent with the course of events after the Crimean conference. Given this situation a relatively minor incident would suffice for a storm

¹⁴² For more details, see V. Pechatnov, "Kak Stalin pisal Ruzvel'tu (po novym dokumentam)," *Istochnik*, no. 6 (1999).

¹⁴³ Postanovleniia Politbiuro ot 13 i 22 marta 1945, RGASPI, f. 17, op. 3, d. 1052, ll. 10, 13.

¹⁴⁴ *Perepiska*, vol. 1, pp. 193-95.

¹⁴⁵ To Marshall from Deane, April 2, 1945, WAHP, CF, Cont. 178.

to break out in America.” (A transcript of this conversation with Harriman’s “friendly warning” was duly distributed to Molotov and all of his deputies.)¹⁴⁶ In early April, Harriman, sensing a lack of support from Washington, decided to devise a conceptual base for his harsh line and once again returned to the idea of using economic assistance for political ends. In his long analytical dispatch to the Secretary of State on April 4th, he unambiguously characterizes the Soviet strategy in Kennan’s terms as one directed at the Bolshevization of all of Europe: “We must clearly recognize that the Soviet program is the establishment of totalitarianism, ending personal liberty and democracy as we know and respect it.” “The Soviet government,” Harriman continued, “will end this war with the largest gold reserve of any country except the United States, will have large quantities of Lend-Lease material and equipment not used or worn out in the war with which to assist their reconstruction, will ruthlessly strip the enemy countries they have occupied of everything they can move, will control the foreign trade of countries under their domination... and at the same time they will demand from us every form of aid and assistance which they think they can get from us while using our assistance to promote their political aims to our disadvantage in other parts of the world.” There was only one conclusion to be made: since the United States could not have a tug-of-war with the Soviet Union over the political methods of disseminating its system, the primary weapon would be financial and economic leverage. “Unless we are ready to live in a world dominated by Soviet influence, we must use our economic power to assist those countries that are naturally friendly to our concepts.” In particular, Harriman proposed “taking care of our western Allies and other areas under our responsibility first,” so as to deprive the USSR of the economic conditions favorable to spreading its influence.¹⁴⁷

Harriman’s recommendations were taken so seriously that they garnered the first page in the State Department’s daily summary of the most important reports.¹⁴⁸ The White House, however, did not pay attention to Harriman’s recommendations; nor did Roosevelt heed the

Ambassador’s urgent request to be recalled to Washington for a personal briefing. Following the President’s orders, the U.S. Combined Chiefs of Staff at the same time declined proposals by Deane and Harriman regarding measures to limit military cooperation with the USSR in response to the “disloyal conduct” of the Soviet leaders.¹⁴⁹ In the end, Roosevelt decided to smooth over the Berne incident and sent Stalin a conciliatory message with assurances that “minor misunderstandings of this character should not arise in the future.”¹⁵⁰ After receiving this dispatch for delivery to the Kremlin, Harriman on his own initiative delayed delivering it on the pretext of waiting for additional information from Kerr (on coordinating the Anglo-American reaction regarding Berne), but mainly in order to try to toughen the tone of the dispatch. “May I respectfully suggest,” he telegraphed to Roosevelt on April 12th, “that the word ‘minor’ as a qualification of ‘misunderstanding’ be eliminated.” The Ambassador had even prepared a new text for the dispatch, which omitted the unpleasant epithet, but the President apparently considered that this nuance was very important. “I do not intend,” he answered Harriman that same day, “to omit the word ‘minor’ as it is my desire to consider the Berne misunderstanding a minor incident.”¹⁵¹

This was one of the President’s last orders, made just a few hours before his death. The Embassy learned of the President’s death on the night of April 13th. “At 2:50 a.m. Harriman telephoned and requested that People’s Commissar Molotov be informed that not long before 23:00 hours Moscow time U.S. President Roosevelt passed away,” the Commissar’s duty officer, M. Potrubach, recorded in his journal. “Harriman stated that he would like to see Stalin and Molotov today as early as possible.” The Ambassador clearly was restless—five minutes later he called the NKID again and asked for a meeting with the Commissar “tonight.” At 3:05 Potrubach called Harriman back to convey Molotov’s wish “to visit the Ambassador immediately, if that was convenient” (this unusual night-time desire evidently arose after Molotov spoke with the “Master”).¹⁵² Molotov, Harriman reported to Washington the following day, “seemed very upset

¹⁴⁶ Conversation with Harriman (from Maisky’s diary), April 5, 1945, AVP RF, f. 0129, op. 29, p. 166, d. 4, ll. 15-16.

¹⁴⁷ FRUS, 1945, vol. 5, pp. 817-19.

¹⁴⁸ Daily Summary of Developments, April 5, 1945—NA, RG 59, General Records of the Office of the Executive Secretariat, Box 1.

¹⁴⁹ Arrangements with the Soviets, April 5, 1945. JCS 1301/2—NA, RG 218, CCS-092 (7-27-44).

¹⁵⁰ *Perepiska*, vol. 1, pp. 228-29.

¹⁵¹ Ambassador Harriman for the President, April 12, 1945; For Ambassador Harriman from the President, April 12, 1945, WAHP, CF, Cont. 178.

¹⁵² AVP RF, f. 06, op. 7, p. 44, d. 693, ll. 1-2.

and agitated... I had never seen him so sincere.” On the evening of the same day Harriman was received by Stalin, who was also apparently shocked by the sudden news. Harriman reported that “[Stalin] greeted me in silence and stood holding my hand for about 30 seconds before asking me to sit down.” After answering Stalin’s questions about the circumstances of the President’s death and about his successor, Harriman assured the Soviet leader that Truman would continue Roosevelt’s policies. “President Roosevelt has died but his cause must live on,” Stalin replied. “We shall support President Truman with all our forces and all our will.”¹⁵³ In the Soviet transcript of this conversation Stalin’s reaction appears more muted, but it contains words spoken by Harriman, missing entirely from the American version, to the effect that Truman “of course, will seek the advice of people who were Roosevelt’s closest advisers,” and that “the people who were closest to Roosevelt would stay on as Truman’s advisers.”¹⁵⁴

These sentiments, by no means elicited by the Soviets, it would seem were called forth to reassure not Stalin as much as Harriman himself, whose powerful protector in the Oval Office was succeeded by a man he did not know. Another comrade-in-arms of the late President understood the situation all too well, namely, Hopkins, who telegraphed Harriman that same day: “I know what a great shock the President’s death must have been. Over the years the President, as you well know, had become devoted to you and had the utmost confidence in your judgment. Many times after I left you at Yalta he spoke of what a great help you were to him.”¹⁵⁵ As Kerr ironically noted in his political report to London, “On the death of President Roosevelt a gust of anxiety about his own position passed over Mr. Harriman. He had been in very close personal touch with the White House... and he seemed to see the bottom falling out of things. He asked himself and me how he was likely to stand with the new President.”¹⁵⁶

Therefore, when Stalin began to speak about support for President Truman on the part of the Soviets, Harriman seized the moment to make a move he had prepared earlier—to raise once again the issue of Molotov going to San Francisco and Washington “as confirmation of what Marshal

Stalin has said regarding the American people and Truman.” The Ambassador even invited Molotov to travel on an American airplane over the shorter route across Europe, and jokingly offered to have a red star painted on the plane. Stalin quipped that a green star would be better, and then seriously showed interest in the question of the invitation—was this an official invitation or did this invitation come from Harriman himself? Harriman admitted that he had been improvising, but he assured Stalin that he was certain that an official invitation would be forthcoming. The temptation to make a gesture of goodwill in regard to Roosevelt and Truman, and at the same time to “sound out” the new President was too great. Stalin, after conferring with Molotov, promised Harriman that the Commissar would make the trip.¹⁵⁷ The Ambassador had a double cause for celebration. In addition to the diplomatic success, the question had been decided regarding his traveling to Washington to report to the new President, which he had requested again after Roosevelt’s death. The following day the State Department readily confirmed that Molotov’s visit “would be welcomed as an indication of earnest cooperation with President Truman.”¹⁵⁸ Molotov, it is true, flew on an American airplane, but not over Europe; instead he traveled the long-tested route across Siberia and Alaska. Harriman, however, departed in the opposite direction, thereby gaining two extra days that were put to good use.

These two days were filled with important meetings in the State Department and the White House. On April 20th, the first meeting between Harriman and Truman took place, with Stettinius and Grew present, during the course of which the Ambassador laid out the full complement of his main arguments with which he had unsuccessfully bombarded Roosevelt, adding for good measure the threat of a “barbarian invasion of Europe.”¹⁵⁹ Truman, however, reacted completely differently than Roosevelt—both in essence and in his direct approach: “The President said that he was not in any sense afraid of the Russians and that he intended to be firm but fair since in his opinion the Soviet Union needed us more than we needed them.” To Harriman’s cautious reminder about the inevitability of compromise, Truman replied, “We could not, of course, expect to get 100 percent of what we wanted but that on important matters he

¹⁵³ FRUS, 1945, vol. 5, p. 826-28.

¹⁵⁴ *Sovetsko-amerikanskii otnosheniia*, vol. 2, p. 357.

¹⁵⁵ Hopkins to Harriman, April 13, 1945, FDRL, H.

Hopkins Papers, Hopkins Messages, 1945.

¹⁵⁶ *British Documents on Foreign Affairs*, part 3, series A, vol. 6, p. 305.

¹⁵⁷ *Sovetsko-amerikanskii otnosheniia*, vol. 2, p. 358.

¹⁵⁸ Secretary of State to Ambassador Harriman, April 14, 1945—NA, RG 59, General Records of the Office of the Executive Secretariat, Box 1.

¹⁵⁹ FRUS, 1945, vol. 5, pp. 231-33.

felt that we should be able to get 85 percent.” When he was left alone with the President, Harriman hastened (as Truman writes in his memoirs) to express that he was relieved that Truman had read all the recent cables and that “we see eye to eye on the situation.”¹⁶⁰ Truman praised the Ambassador for his good work and asked him to continue sending “long messages.”

Inspired by his successful debut, Harriman continued his campaign at two meetings with the State Department administration on April 20-21, at which the discussion more concretely addressed sore points in American-Soviet relations. They discussed the possibility of using various incentives to exert pressure on the USSR, the main one being the credit for postwar reconstruction. Calling for a rebuff to the “Soviet threat,” Harriman at the same time counseled, “it was important not to overestimate Soviet strength. The Army is an extraordinarily effective but disorganized mass of human beings. Almost all of the Army’s transport equipment and much of its food is supplied by us. The country is still fantastically backward. There is no road system, railroad mileage is very inadequate, and ninety percent of the people of Moscow live in a condition comparable with our worst slum areas.”¹⁶¹ It was precisely this backwardness, Harriman reported, which was responsible for the intense interest on the part of Moscow for U.S. economic cooperation and which would better the chances of the Kremlin yielding on political issues. The administration reacted very favorably and these ideas were soon put into action.

The position of the U.S. military command also quickly changed after Roosevelt’s death. The Combined Chiefs of Staff already on April 17-23 were reviewing its decisions made only two weeks earlier, and agreed with Deane and Harriman that joint projects with the Soviets should be terminated.¹⁶²

Truman’s first meeting with Molotov on April 22nd was a preliminary “get-acquainted” affair and went rather smoothly. However, the subsequent meeting of the Big Three’s foreign ministers served to confirm that an impasse on the Polish question had been reached. Molotov had strict instructions from Stalin to evade Allied attempts “to resolve the Polish question with you in

America,” allegedly because of the absence of representatives from the Polish Provisional Government.¹⁶³ Meanwhile, by this time the Soviet government had taken yet another step toward the legitimization of its Polish allies, by announcing their intention (“to accommodate the demands of the Soviet and Polish people”) to conclude with them a treaty on friendship and alliance. Vyshinsky had informed Harriman of this on April 16th, clearly relishing the effect produced by the suddenness: “At first Harriman clearly had lost his bearings and he apparently did not know how he should react,” Vyshinsky recorded in his journal. After recovering, the Ambassador spoke of the necessity to wait for the formation of the new Polish government and for Washington to have time to issue a statement on this matter officially. In reply Vyshinsky magnanimously agreed to hear the American side, but “made it understood that the conclusion of the treaty could in no way be dependent upon remarks from the American government, if such remarks should be forthcoming.”¹⁶⁴

Not surprisingly given the circumstances, the “Polish commission” in Washington had not made any progress. Before his next meeting with Molotov, Truman called a meeting to discuss Soviet policy with the Secretary of State, the military command, and Harriman. After listening to Stettinius’s gloomy report on the results of the meeting of the three ministers, Truman set the tone for the discussion: “he felt that our agreements with the Soviet Union so far had been a one way street and that could not continue... He intended to go on with the plans for San Francisco and if the Russians did not wish to join us they could go to hell,” although at his previous meeting with Harriman, Truman had acknowledged that “without Russia there would not be much of a world organization.”¹⁶⁵

However, Secretary of War Henry Stimson and General Marshall expressed themselves much more carefully. Stimson reminded them that the USSR had faithfully fulfilled their obligations in “big military matters” and he called for an understanding of Soviet motives in the Polish question. According to Stimson, “the Russians perhaps were being more realistic than we were in regard to their own security.” Marshall confirmed the military’s great interest in the USSR’s entry into the war with Japan, and agreed with Stimson

¹⁶⁰ H. Truman, *Memoirs*, vol. 1, “Year of Decision” (New York, 1955), p. 72.

¹⁶¹ FRUS, 1945, vol. 5, pp. 839-46.

¹⁶² Revision of Policy with Relation to Russia, April 23, 1945—NA, RG 218, Geographic File 1942-1945, CCS 092 USSR (30-27-45), Sec. 1.

¹⁶³ AP RF, f. 45, op. 1, d. 770, l. 1.

¹⁶⁴ Meeting with U.S. Ambassador Harriman, April 16, 1945, AVP RF, f. 0129, op. 29, p. 166, d. 4, ll. 21-22.

¹⁶⁵ FRUS, 1945, vol. 5, p. 233.

that the Polish question made “the possibility of a break with Russia... very serious.” Harriman, Forrestal and Deane supported the President: in the Ambassador’s opinion, firmness would only help to avoid a larger break, especially as the USSR, Deane added, will enter the war with Japan regardless of other factors. In short, Forrestal concluded “that if the Russians were to be rigid in their attitude we had better have a show down with them now than later.”¹⁶⁶

And this was precisely what Truman did that same day at his meeting with Molotov. The several versions of this memorable meeting differ significantly,¹⁶⁷ with Truman’s account being the most dramatic (“I just gave him a straight one-two to the jaw”)—an exaggeration that becomes obvious when one compares the official transcripts of both sides. Nonetheless, there is no doubt that “the true successor to Roosevelt’s legacy” subjected Molotov to a cold shower, above all on the Polish question. Afterwards Harriman would recall that he was surprised by “Truman’s attack” and regretted this “mistake,” since “[Truman’s] behavior gave Molotov an excuse to tell Stalin that the Roosevelt policy was being abandoned.”¹⁶⁸ The People’s Commissar undoubtedly was cursing under his breath both the difficult journey and the man who had organized it, whose solemnly silent face seemed to confirm the seriousness of Truman’s reprimand.

Further events merely confirmed that the political weather in Washington had changed. The United Nations founding conference in San Francisco began with bitter disputes on procedural questions, while in the lobby of the Fremont Hotel, where the conference was held, rumors circulated about an impending conflict and even war between the Allies. One of the main sources of these rumors was the U.S. Ambassador to Moscow. Although formally Harriman was merely an adviser to the American delegation, he took upon himself the role of one of its major representatives. At a series of briefings for American journalists and publishers he decided to open the public’s eye to the treachery of Soviet policies, and without mincing words he set forth his vision of an “irreconcilable conflict” breaking out between the Allies and the necessity for a new tough approach to the USSR. Many journalists were outraged by the unusually hostile tone—all the more so from a

man who had a reputation for being a close supporter of Roosevelt. The well-known radio commentator Raymond Swing even left the room as a sign of protest, while the dean of American journalism, Walter Lippmann, in a fit of temper told Kerr that “Harriman should be recalled from Moscow.”¹⁶⁹ Both journalists later shared their misgivings with acquaintances in the State Department. Rumors about the bellicose declarations of “official persons” (including Harriman himself) were picked up by the press and elicited a flood of indignant letters to the State Department. But no reprisals were forthcoming. And where would they have come from if even Joseph Grew—the State Department’s number 2 man—believed that war with the USSR in the near future was inevitable and Harriman and Bohlen had to dissuade him from circulating a memorandum on this score.¹⁷⁰

Harriman’s chief concern, however, was not public opinion, but the government’s. With his very active participation in early May two initiatives were prepared. On May 9th, the day following the signing of the Act on Germany’s Unconditional Surrender, at a meeting with Stettinius in San Francisco, Harriman’s long-standing proposal was accepted to sharply reduce Lend-Lease deliveries to the USSR, redirecting them for economic assistance in Western Europe.¹⁷¹ Stettinius sent the corresponding orders to Washington; Harriman left for the capital that same day. On May 10th he was present at a key interdepartmental meeting on the fate of Soviet Lend-Lease. The next day Grew and Leo Crowley (the Foreign Economic administrator) presented to Truman a draft of a directive that stated that planned deliveries to the Soviet Union “should be cut off immediately.”¹⁷² Truman signed the directive right away, and early on the morning of May 12th Crowley’s representatives on the Committee for Soviet Protocol were insisting on the literal interpretation of “cut off immediately”—not only was the loading of ships in port brought to a halt, but ships on the Mediterranean and Black seas bound for the USSR were turned back.¹⁷³ This last action was clearly

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 252-55.

¹⁶⁷ See, for example, the transcript of Molotov’s meeting with U.S. President Truman, April 23, 1945, AVP RF, f. 06, op. 7, p. 43, d. 677, ll. 50-51.

¹⁶⁸ *Special Envoy*, pp. 453-54.

¹⁶⁹ V. Pechatnov, *Volter Lippman i puti Ameriki* (Moscow, 1994), p. 200.

¹⁷⁰ See V. Pechatnov, “SSHA: Skrytye debaty po ‘russkomu voprosu’ v 1945 g.,” *Novaia i noveishaia istoriia*, no. 1 (1997).

¹⁷¹ Memorandum of Conversation, May 9, 1945, WAHP, CF, Cont. 179.

¹⁷² FRUS, 1945, vol. 5, 999-1000.

¹⁷³ J. Hutchins to B. Larsen, May 12, 1945, FDRL, President’s Soviet Protocol Committee, Box 4.

uncalled for and was interpreted as an intentional provocation, especially as all this was done without informing the Soviets, who were simply notified of an “immediate adjustment” in the delivery of supplies.

The Soviet representatives in New York immediately informed the embassy about what was happening in the harbor and the chargé d’affaires, M. Novikov, urgently demanded an explanation from Grew, who denied the existence of such orders and directed Novikov to another of Stettinius’s deputies—William Clayton. The State Department immediately opened an investigation into the matter, in which Harriman was actively involved. He was the first to sound the alarm by telephoning all the key players (Crowley, Clayton, Generals York and Wesson), after which it was decided to once again turn the ships around and have them resume the deliveries as originally planned.¹⁷⁴ That evening Clayton informed Novikov of the reversal, explaining that what had happened was due to a misunderstanding. The members of the Soviet Protocol Committee complained privately about the authors of the unfortunate phrasing that had tripped the President up, and hoped that “no real damage was done.”¹⁷⁵

The damage, however, proved to be considerable. Even the experienced Soviet diplomats in Washington, who had a sense of the bureaucratic muddle brought about by this decision, were struck by the “repressive measure,” as Novikov reported to Moscow.¹⁷⁶ In Moscow it was interpreted both as an attempt to apply political pressure on the USSR and as a break from the depoliticization of Lend-Lease under Roosevelt. Restrained indignation informed even the official diplomatic note of response, which dryly stated that the Soviet Union was prepared to abide by the decisions of the U.S. government if it “did not see any other solution.” Molotov’s stern instructions to the Soviet ambassador sent with that same diplomatic note plainly and forcefully expressed the feeling in Moscow: “Do not barge in with pitiful requests. If the U.S. want to cut off the deliveries, it will be all the worse for them.”¹⁷⁷

Thus once again rudeness, as in the case with Truman’s “right on the jaw,” backfired. On the one hand, Moscow’s irritation and uncompromising

attitude were intensified, while on the other hand, Washington was forced to back down. The tone of this had been at odds with Harriman’s recommendation for a tough stand and a “friendly” tone when dealing with the Russians. Sensing the tough line the Kremlin would adopt, Harriman persuaded Truman, not without some difficulty, to approve Bohlen’s plan of sending Hopkins to Moscow to clear away all the stumbling blocks in the relations between the two countries, since Hopkins still enjoyed the Kremlin’s enormous respect.

At the same time, the Ambassador, with Grew’s support, undertook a revision of the Yalta accords on the Far East. The end of the war in Europe had bolstered the belief that the USSR one way or another would enter the war with Japan and at the same time it was believed that Soviet participation had become less essential, all of which tempted Harriman and several other American diplomats to lower the price that had been promised but not yet paid to the Soviet Union for its participation. Specifically, the discussion centered on cutting back on the rights assigned the Soviets in Port Arthur and Dairen, getting additional concessions on Manchuria and Korea, as well as allowing the U.S. Air Force access to the Kurile Islands. Grew dispatched an inquiry on these points to the Secretary of War on May 12th.¹⁷⁸ Stimson, however, was not favorably disposed to the plan. He emphasized that the U.S. military attached great significance to the USSR’s entry into the war with Japan; moreover, he believed it was impossible to prevent the Red Army from occupying the territories under question (with the exception of the Kuriles, where U.S. interference would prolong the war with Japan and result in larger losses).¹⁷⁹ Retrenching on Yalta did not succeed this time, though attempts such as these would continue in the future.

But in general Harriman left Washington satisfied: he had made a significant contribution to the new policy toward Moscow and he had managed to confirm his special position as a close adviser to the new president and his main go-between in relations with Stalin. The Ambassador’s personal relations with Truman had also shaped up nicely, reinforced by generous gifts

¹⁷⁴ General York, Memorandum for Members of the President’s Soviet Protocol Committee, May 15, 1945, *ibid.*

¹⁷⁵ Phone conversation between General Hull and General York, May 12, 1945, *ibid.*

¹⁷⁶ *Sovetsko-amerikanskie otnosheniia*, vol. 2, p. 389.

¹⁷⁷ AP RF, f. 3, op. 66, d. 296, l. 13.

¹⁷⁸ Memorandum for the Secretary of War, May 12, 1945, NA RG 165, ABC, Russia (August 22, 1943), Sec. 3

¹⁷⁹ Secretary of War to the Acting Secretary of State, May 14, 1945, WAHP, CF, Cont. 179.

from Moscow, as he had done with Roosevelt.¹⁸⁰ As Kerr noted in his report, “Mr. Harriman returned from San Francisco apparently reassured and feeling that he had the confidence of the State Department and the White House.”¹⁸¹

Pressing matters awaited him in Moscow: negotiations to settle disputes on Lend-Lease and credits, the Polish question, and preparations for the next meeting of the Big Three. In Washington, Harriman had tried to convince Truman to move this meeting earlier, before the withdrawal of the principal U.S. military forces from the continent, but the President had his own reasons—he was waiting for the results of the first nuclear weapons test and he wanted to get used to his new position, afraid that he might play a losing hand with the Big Two—Churchill and Stalin. As far as economic assistance was concerned, the administration’s new stance on this issue was clearly conveyed in the State Department’s daily summary of events for the President, which reported on Harriman’s meetings with Mikoyan—“to give as little as possible and to use these deliveries to further our own aims and not those of the Russians.”¹⁸² Washington requested that all future accountings on Lend-Lease be put on a commercial basis (with the exception of deliveries to the Far East) and dragged its feet on deciding what to do about credits. Harriman had also cooled to this idea of his. In part influenced by Kennan, he now believed that the Kremlin would use this credit for purposes that were hostile to U.S. interests and that the Russians would almost certainly not make big political concessions in order to receive these credits. Mikoyan was already reproaching Harriman for re-routing supplies intended for the USSR to countries in Western Europe, even before the Soviets received preliminary notification about this.¹⁸³

The issue of putting Lend-Lease deliveries on a commercial basis was gradually settled, which cannot be said about the Polish question. Further

meetings of the tripartite commission had not settled anything and the Ambassador was placing all his hopes on Hopkins’ talks with Stalin, which began on May 26th with Molotov and Harriman taking part.

Hopkins (whom Churchill not for nothing had nicknamed “Root of the Matter”) immediately won over Stalin by finally calling a spade a spade—in the spirit of Yalta, the U.S. would acknowledge that “the members of the present Warsaw regime would constitute a majority of the new Polish Provisional Government.”¹⁸⁴ Hopkins also let it be understood that the U.S. might agree to the quotas proposed by Moscow (three from London and five from Poland) if the Soviets were to make concessions on the persons to be invited for consultation. After this was settled the bargaining was reduced to drawing up the list of persons to be invited, which would be submitted for approval by the end of the negotiations. Stalin had to resign himself with the inclusion of not only Mikolajczyk, but also Witos and Stanczyk. Moscow considered the first one to be an unacceptable candidate on account of his “kulak origins” and “popularity among the well-to-do peasantry.”¹⁸⁵ The second candidate (the leader of the Socialist Party), Stalin had characterized in a telegram as a “figure who could not gain our sympathy.”¹⁸⁶ In view of these concessions, Hopkins and Harriman recommended that the White House give its consent to the present list. Consent quickly followed from both Washington and London. Nevertheless, the overall balance favored the pro-Soviet contingent. Modzelewski, the Ambassador of the Provisional Government in Poland, upon learning of the agreement struck on June 6th, in a meeting at the NKID called it a “victory on all fronts” and a “great and undoubted success for Soviet diplomacy.”¹⁸⁷

The composition of the new Polish government was finally agreed upon during consultations, conducted under the aegis of the tripartite commission, of the Polish representatives who had been invited to Moscow. The “non-Lublin Poles” won only six places out of twenty-one and all the

¹⁸⁰ See Truman’s expressions of thanks for the “wonderful Russian caviar” and the Ambassador’s other presents (H. Truman to A. Harriman, May 14, 1945, *ibid.*).

¹⁸¹ A. Kerr to E. Bevin, August 29, 1945, *British Documents on Foreign Affairs*, part 3, series A, vol. 6, p. 305.

¹⁸² Memorandum for the President: Current Foreign Developments, May 31, 1945, Harry S. Truman Library (henceforth HSTL), President’s Secretary File, Subject File.

¹⁸³ A. Harriman to the Secretary of State, May 30, 1945, FRUS, 1945, vol. 5, p. 1008.

¹⁸⁴ Memorandum of Hopkins-Stalin conversation, May 30, 1945, *ibid.*, p. 305.

¹⁸⁵ *Kratkie spravki o poliakakh, vyzyvaemykh v kachestve lits dlia konsul’tatsii o budushchem Vremennom Pol’skom pravitel’stve*, April 2, 1945, AVP RF, f. 06, op. 7, p. 39, d. 588, ll.27-28.

¹⁸⁶ AP RF, f. 45, op. 1, d. 770, l. 1.

¹⁸⁷ Transcript of conversation with Modzelewski, Ambassador of the Polish Republic, June 7, 1945 (from the journal of A. N. Abramov), AVP RF, f. 7, op. 10, p. 21, d. 304, l. 57.

key power departments remained in the hands of Bierut's party. While recommending that the White House recognize the new government, Harriman did not conceal the contrast between the "high spirits" of Molotov and the Warsaw Poles and "the other Poles [who] were seriously concerned."¹⁸⁸ During the negotiations he had become well acquainted with all of the Polish candidates and could discern the true mood on both sides. Harriman, like the pro-Western Poles, saw the only hope for averting the complete Sovietization of Poland to be the promised "free elections" and winning over Poland to the side of the U.S. by economic means. (The Ambassador's recommendation on economic assistance to Warsaw laid the foundation for the U.S. initial approach to the new regime.¹⁸⁹) But misgivings for the future alternated with a feeling of relief—the excruciating Polish marathon was behind him, and the Secretary of State was "deeply grateful" for the work he had done.¹⁹⁰ Much later, it is true, some American historians in their search for guilty parties accused Harriman of pandering to Stalin and his policies on Poland and practically name him as the author of the Yalta conception for the "reorganization" of the Lublin government—an accusation, which, to put it mildly, is not fully deserved.¹⁹¹

Hopkins' visit, which had resolved certain other vexed issues as well (above all, the procedural question of voting in the Security Council), for a time improved the atmosphere in Moscow. "Attitude of Soviet officers less constrained since Mr. Hopkins departed," the Ambassador reported in his telegram to Truman. "Stalin presented Harriman with two trained cavalry horses."¹⁹² (The Ambassador, a passionate horseman, had noticed them at a military parade and Stalin there and then made a present of them for the personal use of Harriman and Kathleen.)

The Polish knot had scarcely been untied before Harriman had to settle down to some other serious negotiations. On June 30th Chinese Foreign Minister, T. V. Soong, arrived in Moscow to conclude a treaty based on the Yalta accords. The State Department and Harriman followed the course of these negotiations very carefully and attempted to use the Chinese to make adjustments to the Yalta agreements, particularly maintaining the "open doors" in Manchuria. The Ambassador met daily with Soong, who not only kept him apprised of developments in the talks, but also coordinated his efforts with him.¹⁹³ By mid-July the only issues yet to be resolved concerned the ports and railroads. Stalin, citing Yalta and the lawful restitution of Russian claims in Manchuria, demanded principal interest in the management of the railroads, as well as including Dairen in the zone of Soviet military control. Soong, supported by the Americans, insisted on the internationalization of Dairen and an equal share in the management of the railroads.¹⁹⁴ Negotiations were suspended at this point; Stalin departed for Berlin and Soong left for Peking to consult with Chiang Kai-shek. In his report to the President and Secretary of State on the impasse that had been reached, Harriman wrote that Soong "is hopeful that you will be able to get Stalin to accept the Chinese position at the forthcoming conference or that you will be able to work out a compromise which the Generalissimo can accept."¹⁹⁵ At the same time he asked the State Department to prepare for Potsdam a detailed interpretation of the Yalta agreements related to the Far East so that they could "press" Stalin fully armed on these issues at the conference.¹⁹⁶

Not a single copy of the secret Yalta protocols could be found in the State Department (it was later discovered in Roosevelt's safe), but this did not hinder its experts from composing a thorough report ("on the basis of our recollections of its contents"), the primary conclusion of which was

¹⁸⁸ A. Harriman to the Secretary of State, June 21, 1945, FRUS, 1945, vol. 5, p. 354.

¹⁸⁹ Suggested US Policy Regarding Poland, June 29, 1945, FRUS, The Conference of Berlin, 1945, vol. 1, pp. 714-16.

¹⁹⁰ Secretary of State to A. Harriman, June 22, 1945, WAHP, H. Feis File, Cont. 88.

¹⁹¹ W. Larch, "Averell Harriman and the Polish Question," *East European Politics and Society* (Fall 1993); historians A. Schlesinger, Jr. and C. Mayer came to Harriman's defense: *Washington Post*, December 17, 1993 and *East European Politics and Society*, Fall 1994.

¹⁹² From Ambassador Harriman to the President, June 9, 1945, HSTL, Map Room Messages of President Truman (Correspondence with Ambassador Harriman).

¹⁹³ See, for example, Conversation between A. Harriman and T. V. Soong, July 12, 1945, WAHP, CF, Cont. 179.

¹⁹⁴ On this stage of the Stalin-Molotov negotiations with Soong, see *Russko-kitaiskie otnosheniia v XX veke. Dokumenty i materialy*, vol. 4, Sovetsko-kitaiskie otnosheniia, 1937-1945, book 2: 1945, edited by S. L. Tikhvinskii (Moscow, 2000), dok. nos. 655, 657, 660, 669, 671, 674, 678.

¹⁹⁵ A. Harriman to the President and Secretary of State, July 13, 1945, FRUS, The Conference of Berlin, vol. 1, p. 684.

¹⁹⁶ A. Harriman to the President and Secretary of State, July 9, 1945, *ibid.*, p. 234.

reduced to the following: the restitution of Russian rights in Manchuria, provided for by the protocol, “if carried out in full would represent a reversion to a situation which was one of the most pernicious foci of imperialism.”¹⁹⁷ Therefore, it was suggested that a “modification in favor of China (and other countries)” be sought on the points regarding Dairen and the railroads, that the “internationalization of Dairen” be interpreted in the spirit of the “open door” policy, while “joint operation” of the railroads “did not call for transfer of exclusive ownership to the Soviet Union and for vesting Russia with a predominant position in management.”

Harriman’s recommendations to Truman and Byrnes during the course of the conference maintained this same line. What’s more, with his skills as a businessman and lawyer, he suggested to tie the USSR’s “pre-eminent interests” in Manchuria to the right of free transit across this territory.¹⁹⁸ The Americans were getting ready for a tough bargaining session.

However, to their amazement and immense pleasure, Stalin at the first meeting with Truman on July 17th expressed his willingness to liberalize the Yalta accords: to relinquish military control over Dairen, declaring it a “free port,” as well as accelerating the subsequent transfer of the railroads to China.¹⁹⁹ Truman happily confided to Stimson that same day that he had “clinched the Open Door in Manchuria.”²⁰⁰ Now all that remained was to promote and consolidate that success at the next stage of Soviet-Chinese talks.

In other respects, Harriman played an altogether modest role at the conference. The new Secretary of State, James Byrnes, regarded the venerable diplomats with jealousy and kept them out of the important negotiations. Harriman’s participation was limited to attending meetings of the three ministers of foreign affairs and he also met regularly with the members of the Polish delegation that had come to Potsdam. The sight of the ravaged Soviet zone in Germany made a baleful impression and only served to intensify his belief that “Soviet expansion” must be blocked. The Ambassador’s frame of mind at the

conference was captured by Joseph Davies who had come to Potsdam as Truman’s personal adviser. Doubly irritated by his appearance (competition, and from someone who was fervently pro-Soviet at that), Harriman spoke out sharply on the need “to protect the position of the President from these barbarians.” Davies, who knew nothing of the evolution in Harriman’s thinking over the last six months was shocked by the Ambassador’s “anti-Soviet views” and warned him frankly that “if the Russian intelligence knew of his attitude, as undoubtedly it now did, it was not probable that his service as Ambassador to the Soviets would be productive of much service in preserving confidence.” The Ambassador tried to reason with Davies, but later he again turned the conversation to the “one way street.” “My rejoinder,” Davies recorded in his diary, “was that whether we liked it or not, we were both on the same street, and unless we could get along, there would be no order and law on that street, but riot and bloodshed, which would destroy not only the street, but the whole community. I urged upon him that he was one of the big men whom history would ultimately hold responsible for either destroying or preserving that unity and confidence upon which Peace depended.”²⁰¹ The conversation ended on a conciliatory note, but each continued to hold his own opinion on the matter.

The Far East Gambit

Upon returning to Moscow from Potsdam, Harriman threw himself into the diplomatic skirmishes related to issues on the Far East. The Sino-Soviet talks resumed on August 7, 1945, with Harriman again playing the role of observer and silent partner. Even before his first meeting with Stalin, Soong came to an agreement with Harriman on China’s initial position and the parameters of possible concessions to the Soviets. The first day of negotiations brought no progress on the most contentious issues, namely, Dairen and the railroads. Armed with instructions from Washington, drawn up on the basis of his own recommendations in Potsdam, Harriman met with Stalin face-to-face on August 8th. The Ambassador laid out the U.S. position on the issue and without beating about the bush proposed that the plan he had conceived in Potsdam be used as a joint Sino-Soviet statement to the U.S. Government on the

¹⁹⁷ J. Grew, Memorandum for the Secretary of State, July 13, 1945, *ibid.*, p. 870.

¹⁹⁸ Yalta Agreements Affecting China, July 18, 1945, FRUS, The Conference of Berlin, vol. 2, pp. 1239-40.

¹⁹⁹ Memorandum of the Meeting of President Truman with Generalissimus Stalin, July 17, 1945, *ibid.*, pp. 1586-87.

²⁰⁰ R. Messer, *The End of an Alliance: James F. Byrnes, Roosevelt, Truman and the Origins of the Cold War* (Chapel Hill, 1982), pp. 101-2.

²⁰¹ Diary, July 17, 1945, Library of Congress, J. Davies Papers.

results of the negotiations.²⁰² The Generalissimus chose to ignore the impudence of Harriman's interference, but he would not agree to a key point in the proposed document that reduced the USSR's "pre-eminent interests" in Manchuria to the right to unrestrained transit for all countries without discrimination or preference.

We are also opposed to discrimination, Stalin answered firmly, "but as regards preference, the Soviet government takes the position that the Soviet Union's pre-eminent interests entail certain preferences and that they should be guaranteed to the Soviet Union."²⁰³ A tough and exhaustive argument ensued, during which Stalin, with map in hand, tried to prove the reasonableness of the Soviet demands in comparison with the rights of tsarist Russia, as well as the necessity for Soviet control of the port in Dairen, in order to maintain security against Japanese provocations: "A port should have one master." Harriman made clear the White House's intent to support China on this matter. Stalin, for his part, "asked that Truman be informed of his request that Truman not make any decision, having heard only one side—the Chinese—without hearing out the Soviet government on this."²⁰⁴ Stalin, however, assured the Ambassador that Dairen would be open for international trade. But Harriman no longer took the Kremlin's master at his word: "In spite of Stalin's assurances it is difficult for me to believe that there can be a truly free port under Soviet management," he reported to Washington.²⁰⁵

Stalin's uncompromising stance prompted the Ambassador to consider another risky idea. In Potsdam he had learned of the U.S. military's proposal to occupy Dairen and Korea in the event that Japan surrendered before Soviet troops had entered these territories. Now, "in light of the way Stalin is behaving increasing his demands on Soong," he advised Truman to immediately implement this recommendation,²⁰⁶ evidently hoping to rule out or at least hamper the port's likely transfer to the Soviets. We do not know what role this dispatch played in the White House's decision, but on the following day, August 11th, Truman ordered that Dairen be occupied after Japan's surrender "if by then it is

not taken by the forces of the Soviet government."²⁰⁷

Truman's directive, issued before Dairen's fate was decided in the course of the Sino-Soviet negotiations and which essentially made provision for its seizure, regardless of the outcome of the talks, could have had extremely severe repercussions. Fortunately, the American landing forces were delayed, and the Soviets outstripped them in this undeclared "race for Dairen."²⁰⁸

Harriman not only coordinated the joint U.S.-Chinese opposition to the Kremlin, but he also prevailed upon Soong not to give in to Stalin's renowned pressure tactics. The Ambassador even insisted that his warning that "further concessions" would lie on the conscience of the Chinese government be entered into the protocol of his meetings with the Chinese minister.²⁰⁹

Both sides were forced to make "further concessions" in the treaty on friendship and alliance that was signed on August 14th—the USSR was granted only a minor advantage in the management of the railroads, the Soviet chief of the Port of Dairen would be confirmed by both parties, and instead of joint ownership of the port the USSR was merely granted the right to lease half its facilities and equipment.²¹⁰ (Stalin also gave verbal assurances regarding the observation of an "open door" policy in Manchuria, but evaded written obligations on that point.) The compromise was reached, in large part, thanks to U.S. intervention and Harriman's personal perseverance. A curious acknowledgment of Harriman's role as the "fifth wheel" can be found in Molotov's exasperated notes on his drafts of the outcome of the Sino-Soviet negotiations: opposite the point on Dairen stands the remark "U.S. interference," and at the end he notes "Harriman's constant contact with Soong" and "attempts on the part of the American government through

²⁰² Memorandum of Conversation with Generalissimus Stalin, August 8, 1945, FRUS, 1945, vol. 7, pp. 960-65.

²⁰³ AP RF, f. 45, op. 1, d. 378, l. 7.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, l. 8.

²⁰⁵ From Harriman for the President and Secretary of State, August 8, 1945, WAHP, CF, Cont. 179.

²⁰⁶ Harriman to the President and the Secretary of State, August 10, 1945, FRUS, 1945, vol. 7, p. 967.

²⁰⁷ Memorandum for Admiral King and General Marshall, August 11, 1945, NA RG 218, W. Leahy Records, Box 9.

²⁰⁸ S. Morrison, *Victory in the Pacific* (Boston, 1961), pp. 354-55; Soviet Occupation of Dairen, August 1945-October 1947. Office of Intelligence and Research, April 11, 1947, OSS/State Department. Intelligence and Research Reports, The Soviet Union, Reel 7.

²⁰⁹ A. Harriman to the President and Secretary of State, August 10, 1945, FRUS, 1945, vol. 7, p. 967.

²¹⁰ For more information on these last stages of the negotiations, see R. A. Mirovitskaia, *Kitaiskaia gosudarstvennost' i sovetskaia politika v Kitae v gody tikhookeanskoi voiny 1941-1945 gg.* (Moscow, 1999), pp. 227-34.

Harriman to interfere in the course of the negotiations.”²¹¹

Rapid developments in military and diplomatic events regarding Japan were in the offing as the Sino-Soviet negotiations were finalized. After the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, U.S. dependence on Soviet assistance was lessened even further, and the primary goal of American diplomacy became limiting the undesirable consequences of the USSR’s participation in the war with Japan, above all, minimizing the role of the Soviet Union in the occupation and postwar reconstruction.

The USSR’s first announcement of its intentions came during the night of August 10th, when Harriman delivered to Molotov the U.S. draft of the response to the Japanese government’s declaration of its intention to surrender. Consultation with Moscow (as was the case with the other Allies) on this issue was purely pro forma, since the White House had already firmly decided to act on its own here—at a meeting of his cabinet on August 10th, Truman had declared that he was prepared to manage without the Russians.²¹² Even though it was already past midnight, the Ambassador requested an urgent response, and two hours later he was invited once again to the Kremlin, along with Kerr. The Soviet government, Molotov submitted, was prepared to join the American declaration, provided that it state that the Allied Powers are prepared “to reach an agreement on the candidacy or candidacies for representatives of the Allied Supreme Command, to which the Japanese Emperor and the Japanese government are to be subordinated.”

The point raised concerned the Allied Supreme Commander in the Far East, and although Harriman had no concrete instructions in the event of a Soviet demarche, he knew all too well and fully shared the firm resolution of the White House and the military to maintain U.S. command in Japan. Therefore, his reaction was demonstrably inflexible. The Soviet government, the Ambassador abruptly replied, cannot claim to have veto power on this question, but as far as the Supreme Commander is concerned, it will undoubtedly be General MacArthur. Molotov objected that it was not a question of veto power, but one of agreement and that Marshal Vasilevsky could perform these duties equally as well as

MacArthur. Kerr tried to smooth over the dispute by emphasizing that although the primary role in the Far East by rights belonged to the U.S., the Allies should consult with one another. Harriman immediately proposed that the word “agreement” be substituted by “consultation” in the Soviet response and that the reference to “several candidacies” be removed, “otherwise Washington will deem this response unacceptable. Harriman added with exasperation in his voice,” the Soviet transcript of his conversation continues, “that the Soviet Union cannot tender such claims after only two days of war with Japan. The United States, by containing the Japanese forces, did not give the Japanese the opportunity to attack the Soviet Union during the most difficult period for the Soviet Union.” The People’s Commissar, naturally, paid back in kind: “Molotov stated that he considers Harriman’s remarks to be absolutely inappropriate. He, Molotov, could in that case cite as an example for Harriman the European war, in which the Soviet Union fought one-on-one for a period of three years.”²¹³

“After a very heated discussion” (as Harriman reported the meeting), Molotov still insisted that the Soviet response be conveyed to the American government, even though the Ambassador continued to repeat that it would be unacceptable.²¹⁴

Harriman’s firmness had its effect: he had scarcely returned to the Embassy before V. Pavlov telephoned to inform him that after discussing the matter with Stalin, Molotov was prepared to clear up the “misunderstanding” that had arisen, in so far as what they had in mind was precisely consultations on the appointment of the high commander. But what about the reference to one candidate instead of several, the Ambassador asked, still not satisfied. Molotov had to get in touch with Stalin yet again (one can imagine the epithets they bestowed upon the obstinate American, whom years later President Kennedy would dub a “crocodile” for his tenacity). As a result, this position was also surrendered by

²¹¹ Plan soobshcheniia o sovetsko-kitaiskikh peregovorakh, AVP RF, f. 06, op. 7, p. 7, d. 79, ll. 11-12.

²¹² J. Blum (editor), *The Price of Vision: The Diary of Henry A. Wallace, 1942-1946* (Boston, 1973), p. 474.

²¹³ Meeting with British Ambassador Kerr and U.S. Ambassador Harriman, August, 11, 1945, AVP RF, f. 06, op. 43, d. 678, ll. 41-42. The Soviet account of this meeting fully confirms the version put forward earlier by V. P. Safronov on the basis of Harriman’s notes (see V. P. Safronov, “SSSR-SSHA-Iaponiia v kontekste ‘kholodnoi voiny’ (1945-1980),” in *Sovetskaia vneshniaia politika v gody ‘kholodnoi voiny’*: novote prochtenie, edited by L. N. Nezhinskii (Moscow, 1995), p. 157.

²¹⁴ A. Harriman to the Secretary of State, August 11, 1945, FRUS, 1945, vol. 6, p. 630.

telephone. Harriman nevertheless insisted on written confirmation of the agreement reached, which he received on the morning following this stormy night.²¹⁵ The final “joint” response to the Japanese was sent from Washington that same day without further coordination with Moscow—“so as not to lose time” (as Harriman wrote to Molotov²¹⁶), and, we should add, so as to prevent further interference from the Kremlin. The Soviet government resigned itself to this fact and with the subsequent appointment, on August 12th, of MacArthur as Supreme Commander in Japan.

In other words, a serious change in the Soviet position was achieved without waiting for approval from Washington—there simply wasn’t time for that and Harriman did not ask for instructions, instead limiting himself to information supplied by the State Department. The Kremlin, accustomed to puppet ambassadors, evidently was convinced that Harriman was acting on instructions from Washington. As he explained his motives many years later, his “great fear, of course, was that if we accepted Molotov’s language we would be in for a long negotiation and they would finally insist that in exchange for agreeing to MacArthur they should have Hokkaido as a Soviet zone of occupation.” Moreover, Harriman did not rule out the possibility (as he later told Stimson’s deputy, Robert Lovett) that Washington “was so keen to get the fighting stopped that it would have accepted almost anything the Russians came back with.”²¹⁷

General Deane considered this skirmish to be Harriman’s most important victory in Moscow.²¹⁸ It soon became known to the public at large. On August 15th, that is, after Japan’s surrender, the respectable *New York Herald Tribune*, citing the London correspondent for CBS Radio, Edward R. Murrow, printed a description of that memorable nighttime fray with details and phrasing that apart from Molotov only Harriman and Kerr could have known. The main topic of the newspaper story was simple and sensational: the Soviets wanted the supreme commander to be a representative of the Red Army; after two hours of heated debates the Soviets withdrew their demands and accepted the appointment of an American as supreme commander in Japan.

Molotov could not leave this version unanswered, since it was a matter not only of decorum in Allied relations, but also of the prestige of a great power that supposedly had been put in its place by the Americans. He personally composed the text of the TASS rebuttal, in which he accurately set forth the essence of the “exchange of opinions” that had taken place, omitting only one detail—his proposal of Vasilevsky’s candidacy. This refutation also noted that “the appointment of General MacArthur took place after consultations with the Soviet Government,” which from the very beginning had not opposed his candidacy. All this allowed the author to conclude that the *New York Herald Tribune*, which reported that “Soviet official circles considered that the Supreme Commander should be a representative from the Red Army and that supposedly such a demand had been presented by the Soviet government to the American government is pure invention.”²¹⁹

This entire exchange of civilities took place on the background of celebrations of Soviet-American friendship held in connection with the visit of the Supreme Commander of Allied Forces in Europe, General Eisenhower. The illustrious commander was greeted not only with all official honors, but also with genuine mass enthusiasm. When he made his appearance with G. K. Zhukov at a soccer match at Dynamo Stadium, Harriman would recall that “the cheers in the stadium surpassed anything I had ever heard.”²²⁰ On August 12th, during the first parade of athletes held on Red Square since the end of the war, Stalin bestowed upon Eisenhower and Harriman an unprecedented honor for “bourgeois guests”—he invited them to stand atop Lenin’s Mausoleum. And that is how they have remained standing to this day on photographs from Soviet newspapers—Harriman on Stalin’s left, Eisenhower on the right, next to Zhukov.

Meanwhile, the diplomatic struggle surrounding Japan and the Far East continued. On August 16th, a second attempt was made by the Kremlin to burrow deeper into Japanese matters, namely, Stalin’s request that the surrender of Japanese troops be secured not only on the Kurile Islands (about which Truman had tried “to forget” in his orders to MacArthur), but in northern Hokkaido as well, about which there had been no discussion in Yalta. While Truman had to yield on the first point, he firmly rejected the Hokkaido

²¹⁵ Podtserob to Kennan, August 11, 1945, AVP RF, f. 06, op. 7, p. 47, d. 743, ll. 17-18.

²¹⁶ *Sovetsko-amerikanskie otnosheniia*, vol. 2, pp. 482-83.

²¹⁷ *Special Envoy*, p. 501.

²¹⁸ J. Deane, *The Strange Alliance*, p. 277.

²¹⁹ *Pravda*, August 18, 1945; for Molotov’s draft see: AVP RF, f. 06, op. 7, p. 47, d. 743, ll. 53-55.

²²⁰ *Special Envoy*, p. 502.

scenario, moreover requesting in a highly brusque manner that the U.S. Air Force be granted the right to have a base on one of the Kurile Islands (a long-held plan of the Americans who hankered after these islands as a staging-post between the Aleutian Islands and Japan). Having swallowed the bitter pill of Hokkaido, Stalin paid Truman back in kind: demands such as these, he replied, are made either to a defeated country or a weak ally, and the USSR is neither of these.²²¹ Truman was forced to back down and sent an apologetic reply in which he explained that he had in mind only temporary landing rights during the Japanese occupation. After reading Truman's letter, Harriman breathed a sigh of relief, since from the very beginning he had considered a base in the Kuriles to be a hopeless proposition. While delivering the letter to Stalin, the Ambassador stated (according to the Soviet transcript of the conversation) that "when he received Truman's first letter on this issue, he, Harriman, had feared that it would not be properly understood by Comrade Stalin. This most recent letter from Truman would clarify the issue."²²² For now the matter was settled, but Harriman knew that it would not end there. He even decided to postpone tendering his resignation until the question of the control mechanism for Japan was resolved. Reporting to Byrnes that he foresaw "some trouble with the Soviets" on this issue, Harriman nevertheless believed it was entirely possible that the U.S. could make a stand for the same predominant role in Japan that the USSR had in Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania.²²³

Harriman was not mistaken. Questions of consolidating the Great Powers' "spheres of influence" were the center of attention at the September meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs in London. The Ambassador did not take an active part in the debates, but rather kept to his customary role of behind-the-scenes adviser. Although he fully approved of Byrnes's tough approach for negotiating with Moscow, he was quick to note a tactical misstep on the part of the inexperienced Secretary of State, namely, he had miscalculated that a preemptory, pedantic tone could be utilized in this dialogue with Moscow. He advised Byrnes that one should always be firm, but that one should not be afraid to be respectful and

friendly.²²⁴ Harriman believed that Byrnes made another mistake with his demonstrative unwillingness even to discuss the issue of organizing the control mechanism for Japan, which merely served to inflame the Soviets' suspicions and dissatisfaction, especially given the fact that at the same time Byrnes and Bevin persistently disputed the legitimacy of the pro-Soviet regimes in Romania and Bulgaria. As Harriman acknowledged at an Embassy conference to discuss the results of the London session, "We are to blame to this extent. We did not keep the Soviets in touch with our own thinking. They are concerned that we are going ahead unilaterally."²²⁵

The London session, which can be characterized as a reciprocal demonstration of toughness, ended without achieving anything and now Harriman, as Byrnes instructed him, would have to "get the train back on the rails."²²⁶ To this end, the Ambassador proposed that "Truman send him a telegram to be delivered to Stalin personally." This would allow Harriman to hear from Stalin himself "the basic questions which were disturbing the Russians." Both Byrnes and Harriman (as well as Truman himself) hoped that talking with Stalin directly would clarify the Soviet position and help to put the post-London impasse behind them. While still in London, Harriman and James Dunn composed a draft, which the White House used as the basis for Truman's letter to Stalin.²²⁷

Delivering this letter, however, proved to be not so simple. In early October the Generalissimus left for the south for his first leave of absence in nine years, which plunged the foreign diplomats and journalists in Moscow into a state of skeptical confusion as they sought to learn the "real reasons" behind the disappearance of the Kremlin's chief resident. Rumors began to circulate that Stalin was gravely ill, had retired and even that he was dead. Harriman was not immune to this frenzied speculation and he informed Washington of Stalin's mysterious and "unprecedented" disappearance from the capital. He more and more insistently requested a meeting with him to deliver a "very important message from President Truman." As a mark of his genuine regard for Stalin, Harriman made assurances that

²²¹ *Perepiska*, vol. 1, p. 265.

²²² AP RF, f. 45, op. 1, d.378, l. 17.

²²³ A. Harriman to Secretary of State, August 23, 1945, FRUS, 1945, vol. 6, p. 689.

²²⁴ Memorandum Handed to Jimmy Dunn, WAHP, CF, Cont. 182.

²²⁵ Ambassador's Staff Conference, October 10, 1945, WAHP, CF, Cont. 183.

²²⁶ *Special Envoy*, p. 510.

²²⁷ For the Secretary from Dunn and Harriman, October 4, 1945, WAHP, CF, Cont. 183.

“as always he would go to Generalissimus Stalin as a friend.”²²⁸ After a lengthy bout of wrangling, Molotov, who did not divulge Stalin’s whereabouts, finally agreed to relay the Allied Ambassador’s request. The latter was quite surprised when he received a positive reply to his request three days later. New archival documents shed light on the motives and circumstances behind this unusual invitation.

Harriman’s request was brought up for consideration by the foreign policy “Politburo Four” on October 16th. That same day they communicated their opinion to the “Master”: “We believe that Harriman should be received, since he bears a message from Truman, and given the President’s request, as well as the fact that the Americans have taken the initiative in this question of further discussions of what transpired at the London session of the Council of Ministers. In this matter, however, it is not desirable that Harriman should know the location of where you are staying for rest purposes.”²²⁹

The comrades’ thoughtfulness was not limited to the Leader’s safety—they enclosed with the dispatch a draft for Stalin’s reply to Harriman, which evidences their desire to emphasize their own importance in the matter: “I, of course, would be happy to receive you as a guest and friend here where I am spending my rest period. At the same time, I should say that it is not customary among us that during a leave of absence the head of government should undertake any decisions without consulting with his government colleagues.”²³⁰

Stalin, like his colleagues, was intrigued by Harriman’s commission. After the break-down of the London talks, his strategy had been one of wait-and-see, expecting that the Allies would falter and meet the Soviet demand on the Balkans and Japan halfway, and return to the Yalta formula for deciding questions of peace treaties. Truman’s “important message” might just be such a step to meet the Soviets halfway, for which it would be possible to break the tradition of a monarch steeped in solitude. Therefore Stalin, after thinking the matter over, sent his response to the Politburo Four in the early hours of October 18th: “In view of your wishes, I do not object to receiving Harriman in Sochi in order to hear his commentary to Truman’s message. If it should become clear

during my conversation with Harriman that he is not confining himself to commentary and is trying to get the issue resolved, I will answer him that as I am on leave of absence I cannot make any decision without consulting a governmental representative. In that case I will summon Molotov and we will either decide in the affirmative, if it is in our favor, or in the negative, if it is not in our favor.”²³¹

After making this concession to collegiality, however, Stalin removed the reference to his government colleagues from the Politburo Four’s draft of the reply to Harriman as well as the Caucasian curtsies to his “guest and friend.” His own handwritten reply (with the postscript: “deliver to Harriman from me”) ran as follows: “I would be happy to receive you in Sochi, where I am spending my leave of absence and am ready to hear *his* [sic!—V.P.] commentary to President Truman’s message.”²³²

Truman’s message largely concerned the Balkans and convening a peace conference, but Harriman was convinced that Stalin was mainly interested in Japan. “Knowing how blunt and direct Stalin has always been in my conversations with him,” the Ambassador wrote to Byrnes, “I believe that he will contend that after inviting the Soviet Union to come into the war against Japan we are now excluding him from appropriate consideration in dealing with a defeated Japan.” Harriman urgently requested instructions on Japan before meeting with Stalin so that he could “present frankly our position and attempt to get his general agreement and so avoid if possible the development of an impasse.”²³³

But Washington did not want him to speak frankly with Stalin about Japan. Indeed, Washington was aiming for a U.S. monopoly on Japan, but wanted to camouflage this by creating the appearance of Allied cooperation. The problem, as Deputy Secretary of State Acheson put it at a conference on October 22, was “to resolve this controversy with the Soviet Union by giving that Government a face-saving solution.”²³⁴ The concrete form of this symbolic participation still remained unclear, since MacArthur objected even to the establishment of an advisory Military Council of which he would be chairman, as the State Department had proposed. Therefore, Harriman was given very vague instructions on this score, which emphasized that all these ideas

²²⁸ Reception of U.S. Ambassador Harriman, October 15, 1945, AVP RF, f. 06, op. 7, pp. 44, d. 681, l. 2.

²²⁹ AP RF, f. 45, op. 1, d. 97, l. 66.

²³⁰ Molotov to Stalin, October 16, 1945, AVP RF, f. 06, op. 7, p. 44, d. 681, l. 5.

²³¹ AP RF, f. 45, op. 1, d. 97, l. 71.

²³² *Ibid.*, pp. 72-74.

²³³ FRUS, 1945, vol. 6, pp. 755-56.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 769.

(including the participation of Soviet troops in the occupation of Japan under MacArthur's command) are of a preliminary nature and are intended to elucidate the Soviet reaction.²³⁵

On October 24th, Harriman accompanied by NKID and NKVD personnel, arrived in Adler, where he was met by V. Pavlov and General Vlasik, the head of Stalin's personal guard, to take him to Gagra.²³⁶ There the Ambassador was comfortably accommodated in Beria's former residence, but Harriman had already managed to note the contrast between the lush natural setting and the poverty of the living conditions of ordinary people.²³⁷ Stalin extended him a cordial welcome on the threshold of his dacha and immediately turned to the business at hand. "The message does not raise the Japanese question," he said, after familiarizing himself with the text, evidently disappointed by the absence of the expected concession. Harriman with alacrity informed Stalin "unofficially of the direction the thinking of the President's advisers was taking in respect to Japan." However, throughout the entire discussion about taking the USSR's interests into account sounded the refrain that "General MacArthur must have the final say in the matter." Stalin heard out the Ambassador attentively, but he did not initiate a detailed discussion of the Japanese question, limiting himself instead to the observation that a Control Commission ought to be created in Japan, similar to those in Hungary and Romania, in which MacArthur would be the chairman with the final word. He also expressed doubt on the expediency of Soviet troops taking part in the occupation of Japan under MacArthur's command, giving as his reason that such participation might infringe upon MacArthur's authority, "which the U.S. does not want." (In actual fact, Stalin simply did not want a symbolic, subordinate role in the occupation.)

The conversation then moved on to the part of Truman's letter that raised the subject of convening a peace conference. The United States, like England, had come out in favor of greatly increasing the delegation to include countries that had shown their loyalty, hoping thereby to leave the USSR and its allies in a clear minority; the Soviet position for the same reasons was exactly

the opposite. Harriman, therefore, spoke of the "indivisibility of war," about the difficulties in calculating the contributions of various countries, about the need to give all countries that one way or another had supported the Allies an opportunity to "state their views" on the drafts of the peace treaties. Stalin was operating with other, more tangible, categories—the number of soldiers "expended" by one or another country, the degree of involvement of different countries ("what does Costa Rica have to do with signing a peace treaty with Romania?"), with preference given to countries that suffered the most or which really had fought against one of the Axis countries. "One cannot put on the same level a nation that truly waged war, made sacrifices and suffered occupation with a nation that made no sacrifices. That would be unjust. He, Comrade Stalin, did not make up the disparities in how individual countries had conducted themselves. It just so happened that some nations waged war, others merely announced that they were in a state of war, while yet others, including some United Nations countries, aided the Germans."²³⁸ Stalin, therefore, first proposed convening several conferences "of the small circle" of countries that were genuinely involved, and then later, as a compromise measure, he agreed to a general peace conference to which the countries involved would be invited in turn to discuss the peace treaties one after the other. Stalin's archive contains a copy of the list of countries the Americans proposed along with the Dictator's notes (each country is marked by a plus or minus). These notes clearly show that a compromise was in the offing, which cannot be said for the question of Japan, to which the two returned the following day in another discussion that lasted almost three hours.

Not given to impulsive decisions, Stalin apparently had carefully thought everything over before speaking out on Japan. He understood perfectly well the game the Americans were playing by creating the outward appearance of Soviet participation in Japan and he did not intend to play into their hand. The following evening he called a spade a spade, and now Harriman had to hear him out and make excuses. The Soviet government, Stalin began, "has not been assigned any role of responsibility in Japan," and did not intend to be an "appendage" without bearing joint responsibility for policy in Japan and without having any influence on this policy." Perhaps the

²³⁵ Ibid., p. 773.

²³⁶ The well-known facts of this visit notwithstanding, P. Sudoplatov in his memoirs writes that Stalin denied Harriman this visit, which supposedly signified the end of his access to the very top and consequently his effectiveness as ambassador (P. and A. Sudoplatov, *Special Tasks*, p. 226).

²³⁷ Visit to Generalissimus Stalin at Gagra, October 24-25, 1945, WAHP, CF, Cont. 183.

²³⁸ Transcript of the meeting between I. V. Stalin and U.S. Ambassador Harriman, October 24, 1945, AVP RF, f. 07, op, 10-v, p. 46, d. 1, l. 14.

United States, Stalin sarcastically inquired, “needs a satellite in Japan rather than an ally. I must say that the Soviet Union is not suited for such a role... It would be more honest for the USSR to get out of Japan altogether rather than remain there as mere furniture.”²³⁹

Stalin’s indignation was undoubtedly genuine. He essentially repeated for the Americans what a month earlier he had conveyed to Molotov in London, when in connection with developments on Japan he wrote of “the impertinence of the English and the Americans” and their lack of an “elementary sense of respect for their ally.”²⁴⁰ But Stalin saved the most serious warning for last: “Comrade Stalin said that he had never been a proponent of an isolationist policy, but that now perhaps the Soviet Union ought to adopt such a policy. Perhaps there’s nothing so wrong with it.” Harriman surmised that it was not so much a question of isolationism as one of refusing to coordinate policy with the Allies and adopting a policy of go it alone.²⁴¹

Stalin probably understood that given the current situation he would hardly succeed in wringing a significant role in Japan from the Americans, but the matter was too serious not to exhaust all the possibilities. Besides he had nothing to lose, since even if nothing were gained, he would be able to get more bargaining power for this concession, for example, U.S. agreement to the Soviet sphere of influence in the Balkans. It was not by accident that in his conversation with Harriman, Stalin unambiguously asked “to convey to the President that he, Comrade Stalin, links the question in Japan with questions raised in the President’s message.”²⁴² The Generalissimus heavily underscored this passage of the transcript.²⁴³

The two men parted on good terms. Stalin, Harriman reported not without a sense of pride, “could not have been more friendly to me personally and when we parted he said that he had been glad to receive me not only as the American Ambassador but as a friend.”²⁴⁴

Harriman’s reports on his meetings with Stalin were written with great zeal and did not come easily for him, since he was an indifferent stylist.

As George Kennan recalled many years later, after each such meeting (usually late at night) the Ambassador would summon his principal aides to Spaso House and “dictate for hours, join battle with nuances of grammar and would resort to our help only on those questions. These vigils would often drag on into the early morning hours, after which I would have to deliver the text to Mokhovaya [i.e., to the Embassy—V.P.], and at 6:00 a.m. Harriman would call again to find out when and how the coding went.”²⁴⁵ Harriman was rarely seen on Mokhovaya Street, entrusting the day-to-day operations of the Embassy to Kennan.

Rumors of the unusual meeting quickly made the rounds of the envious diplomatic corps—all the more so since upon his return to Moscow, Harriman publicly refuted speculation that the dictator was ill. With the Leader’s approval, Molotov was once again forced to intervene—on October 27th TASS, citing “authoritative sources,” reported that Harriman on a special commission for President Truman had visited I.V. Stalin in Sochi, where he is spending his leave, and had two meetings with him.²⁴⁶ A detailed transcript of both meetings was carefully edited by Stalin and on his orders was sent to the Politburo Four.²⁴⁷

On the day after his return to Moscow, Harriman received instructions from Washington with new proposals for the control mechanism in Japan, which made provision for the creation of an Allied Military Council, a purely advisory body under MacArthur, in tandem with the Far Eastern Commission. The Ambassador immediately noted a point that the Kremlin would find unacceptable—the voting procedure proposed for the Far Eastern Commission, by which decisions were to be made by a majority of votes, including three of the four main Allies. The Ambassador predicted that Stalin would object to the proposed procedure, take it to be directed against the Soviet Union and insist on a unanimous vote from the four main powers. The Kremlin’s motives in this instance, he explained in his next dispatch, were completely understandable, since it feared that “Japan like Germany might some day be utilized by Western Powers as springboard for attack on USSR. Japan as much as Eastern Europe is in Soviet zone of vital strategic interest.”²⁴⁸

²³⁹ Ibid., I, 23.

²⁴⁰ See “Perepiska Stalina s Molotovym,” *Istochnik*, (1999), no. 2, p. 76.

²⁴¹ *Special Envoy*, p. 517.

²⁴² Transcript of the meeting between I. V. Stalin and U.S. Ambassador Harriman, AVP RF, f. 07, op. 10-v, p. 46, d. 1, l. 18.

²⁴³ AP RF, f. 45, op. 1, d. 378, l. 48.

²⁴⁴ FRUS, 1945, vol. 6, p. 796.

²⁴⁵ Author’s interview with George Kennan, March 8, 1995.

²⁴⁶ *Pravda*, October 27, 1945 (the corrections on this announcement were made by Molotov, see AVP RF, f. 07, op. 7, p. 44, d. 681, l. 49).

²⁴⁷ AP RF, f. 45, op. 1, d. 378, ll. 30, 62.

²⁴⁸ FRUS, 1945, vol. 6, pp. 805, 809.

However, at his meetings with Molotov on November 1 and 3, the People's Commissar did not raise objections to this point. Molotov not only gave his preliminary approval, but during the course of the discussion he even proposed reducing the number of required votes of the leading countries be reduced from three to two. Molotov's reservations hinged on granting MacArthur final authority, even in those cases when members of the Allied Military Council were opposed. Harriman answered, according to the Soviet transcript of the meeting, that in those instances "the Supreme Commander has the final decision and that Generalissimus Stalin had allegedly given his consent to this issue during their meeting in Sochi."

In his meeting with Harriman, Stalin had indeed recognized MacArthur's "final word" and his predominant role. While studying the transcript of the meeting, Molotov heavily underlined the pertinent passages.²⁴⁹ Apparently, that was why he did not dispute this position. But this time he was poorly served by following the letter of the Leader's instructions. Because now Stalin, after receiving Molotov's notes on his recent meetings with Harriman, underlined in exasperation both Molotov's consent to the voting rules and the passage about MacArthur's final authority.²⁵⁰ Stalin received in Gagra along with these notes a draft of the response to the Americans on the Japanese question, drawn up by Molotov and approved by the Politburo Four, which essentially represented a statement of agreement to the U.S. proposals.

If Stalin noticed his blunder, which Harriman was quick to seize, he preferred to pass it on to his deputy, particularly since the latter had given him grounds to do so by his haste on the voting issue. On October 14th, the Master sent the Politburo Four an angry reply, calling their draft "unsatisfactory." First, he objected to the Americans' designation of the body as the Allied Military Council, believing that it excessively limited its functions and "emphasized the advisory aspect of this body under MacArthur, which is not to our advantage." It should be called the Allied Control Council. Then he proceeded to the allocation of authority between MacArthur and the Allied Council: "You avoid the question of the right of one of the members of the control body to appeal to its government in the event of a

disagreement with MacArthur on questions of principle... But to avoid a question does not mean that it is resolved," he writes for the edification of the Politburo Four. "...Harriman is incorrect in asserting that I agreed to confer upon MacArthur rights without appeal." Stalin proposed that in cases of disagreements of principle between the Council and the Supreme Commander to stop the execution of this decision until the governments come to an agreement. But Stalin saved his harshest words at the end for Molotov (who by this point had committed other offenses at the London session of the Council of Ministers). "The proposed majority of three votes from the Great Powers is an underhanded proposition that seeks to isolate us," he wrote on the voting procedure in the Far Eastern Commission, thereby confirming Harriman's prognosis. "The proposal of a majority of two votes is not better than the proposal for three votes. Molotov was not authorized to speak out in favor of two votes. Molotov's conduct of setting himself apart from the government and portraying himself as more liberal and conciliatory than the government is absolutely inappropriate." In conclusion Stalin ordered that the Soviet objections "in the form of amendments to the American proposals" be conveyed to Harriman, which was a tactically astute move.

The Politburo Four instantly responded to Stalin's scolding, lumping the blame on its eldest member. That same day Stalin received for his approval from Beria, Malenkov and Mikoyan a draft of a Politburo resolution: "It is acknowledged that in his negotiations with Harriman, Molotov committed a mistake... Comrade Molotov should be reprimanded because he was not authorized in his negotiations with Harriman to speak out in favor of two votes and to acknowledge as incorrect Molotov's behavior of setting himself apart from the government and to portray [sic!—V.P.] as more liberal and conciliatory than the government." A handwritten note by the offender was enclosed with this text: "In future I will try not to commit such mistakes."²⁵¹

Molotov indeed did try. Already the following day he urgently invited Harriman and handed him the Soviet amendments based on Stalin's instructions. Ignorant of the clashes in the Kremlin, the Ambassador decided that this was another instance of Molotov's "customary tactics of increasing Soviet demands." Nevertheless, Harriman recommended to Byrnes that some small concession be made: to agree to the Allied Control Council or Commission, without altering the

²⁴⁹ Transcript of meeting between I. V. Stalin and U.S. Ambassador Harriman, AVP RF, f. 07, op. 10-v, p. 46, d. 1, l. 5.

²⁵⁰ AP RF, f. 45, op. 1, d. 770, ll. 92-93.

²⁵¹ AP RF, f. 45, op. 1, d. 770, l. 108.

purely advisory functions of this body, to allow broad consultations in the event of differences of principle between the Council and MacArthur, reserving for the latter the final word, if a settlement cannot be reached.²⁵²

However, Washington found the Soviet proposals to be unacceptable and on November 9th Harriman delivered to Molotov a diplomatic note from his government. The note lay special stress on the fact that the Soviet amendments “paralyzed” the actions of the U.S. in Japan and represent a “complete departure from Stalin’s statement to [Harriman].”²⁵³

These persistent references to the Generalissimus’s own views compelled Stalin to essay yet another explanation both for his own people and the Americans. On November 11th, he composed in his own hand a note in response, which maintained that “the information the U.S. government has in regard to the position of the Soviet government and Generalissimus Stalin contains certain inaccuracies. Stalin recognized and continues to recognize that the U.S. has greater responsibilities in regard to matters in Japan that do the other Allies, but he never agreed that these responsibilities should be borne exclusively by the U.S., for he believes that responsibility should also be borne by the Allied Powers whose troops took an active part in the defeat of the Japanese armed forces.” This same ponderously precise tone (“Stalin recognized and continues to recognize”) was also used to describe his views on MacArthur’s “deciding vote” in all matters except for “ones of principle, such as changes in the regime of control over Japan, changes in the leadership of the Japanese government, etc.” An unusual summary of the USSR’s position followed: “In all this the Soviet government is in agreement with Stalin.”

The Gagra hermit dispatched the draft of the note to the Politburo Four for their consideration, adding that he “was not certain whether the draft was not without faults.” The Four, with the recent dressing-down fresh in their minds, did not share the Master’s authorial doubts. “We approve of the draft, we do not have any corrections,” they telegraphed the next morning to Gagra.²⁵⁴ They, however, risked making one correction: they changed “Stalin” to “I. V. Stalin.” The note was delivered that same day to Harriman, who immediately pronounced the revisions to be unacceptable. The Embassy did not detect Stalin’s

authorship of the note; Kennan was the only one to be put on his guard by the unusual emphasis on the Soviet government’s solidarity with its premier, and he saw this as a sign that Stalin’s position was shaky. (Harriman answered that he did not see the grounds to draw such conclusions.)²⁵⁵

If the firmness of Stalin’s position occasioned no doubts for the Ambassador, then the motives and bounds of the dictator’s policies continued to raise questions. Harriman’s most dire misgivings on this score were aggravated by Maxim Litvinov, who at a chance meeting in the foyer of the Bolshoi Theater lamented the hopelessness of the situation and his powerlessness to change it. In his report on this conversation to Washington, Harriman placed it in the general context of growing anti-American sentiment in Moscow and the tendency toward unilateral actions in Soviet policy.²⁵⁶

A few days later Harriman, trying to explain this shift in sentiment, singled out the role of the atomic factor and tried to put himself in the Russians’ shoes after Hiroshima. The bomb’s psychological effect on the Russians, he wrote, proved to be particularly strong, since it came on the heels of the triumph of Soviet military and political might, which after long years of isolation and wars, it seemed, had at last safeguarded the security of the USSR for many years to come by creating the necessary line of defense along practically the entire perimeter of the country. The atomic bomb in one fell swoop devaluated the role of the Red Army as defender and the importance of the territories won during the war, which “must have revived their old feeling of insecurity.” The Ambassador offered this hypothesis “only as a partial explanation of the strange psychological effect of the atomic bomb on the behavior of the Soviet leaders... as a result it would seem that they have returned to their tactics of obtaining their objectives through aggressiveness and intrigue.”²⁵⁷

In light of what we now know about the Kremlin’s thinking at the time, Harriman made a remarkably accurate diagnosis, though it is not clear why he considered this psychological effect to be “strange.” Soviet fears of a U.S. atomic monopoly were just as natural as the euphoria of the Americans who came out of the war not only as the only economic superpower, but the owner of the monopoly on the new superweapon. It was precisely this “American arrogance” to which

²⁵² FRUS, 1945, vol.6, pp. 831-32.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, 834-36.

²⁵⁴ AP RF, f. 45, op. 1, d. 770, l. 141.

²⁵⁵ G. Kennan to A. Harriman, December 11, 1945, WAHP, CF, Cont. 184.

²⁵⁶ FRUS, 1945, vol. 5, pp. 921-22.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 921-22.

Maisky gently referred during one of his last meetings with Harriman in early December. He enjoined his “old friend” to understand “that we all live on the same small planet, and that this planet with each year becomes smaller and smaller, and nations come into contact with one another more and more, and therefore the United States in its attempts to maintain peace should recognize to a greater extent the principles of equality with all the attending circumstances this implies when dealing with other countries....” Harriman, according to the Soviet transcript of this conversation, agreed that the Americans had indeed exhibited “elements of arrogance,” but he tried to make the argument that the case in question was merely a matter of individual persons or groups in the United States.²⁵⁸ (Stalin and Molotov underlined the passage about “arrogance,” which evidently coincided with their own sense of the situation.²⁵⁹)

It was during this period that the State Department’s Division of Eastern European Affairs was weighing the advisability of having the Ambassador, given his unique access, seek a meeting with Stalin: “Mr. Harriman has enjoyed a somewhat unique position in having dealt with Stalin more than most other foreigners... [Harriman’s position] offers an excellent opportunity for him to speak frankly with Stalin on these subjects.” The Eastern European Division, however, decided to keep this option in reserve “unless our position on these matters reaches the Russians on a higher level.”²⁶⁰

This opportunity came in December at the Moscow Council of Ministers of the three Great Powers. The initiative came from Byrnes, who had tried to untie the post-London knot in Allied relations and hoped to conduct negotiations with Stalin personally. He did not know that on the eve of the conference Stalin had urged his colleagues to adopt a policy of “endurance and determination” in dealing with the Anglo-Saxons, reminding them that from partners such as these “we cannot get anything serious if we begin to give way to intimidations, if we show signs of wavering.”²⁶¹

Harriman was skeptical of Byrnes’s diplomatic capabilities—he did not like the fact that there had been no preliminary consultations with the British, nor that his advice to the Secretary of State on the

strategy for the negotiations had been ignored, nor Byrnes’s refusal to inform Washington on a regular basis about the conference’s progress. As a result, the Ambassador abandoned his attempts to influence Byrnes, having decided (as he wrote in his diary): “I thought I had better wait and see what happened.”²⁶²

Nevertheless, a quite serious bargaining session took place, as a result of which the USSR and the U.S. consolidated their pre-eminent interests in their spheres of influence at the price of mutual concessions: the U.S. and England agreed to recognize the pro-Soviet governments in Romania and Bulgaria, provided that a minimum number of representatives of the “loyal opposition” be included in the governments, while the USSR resigned itself to an altogether modest role in the Far East Commission and Allied Council in Japan, which still represented progress in comparison to the Americans’ frontal attack on this issue in the past.²⁶³ Compromise solutions were also reached on the participants for the forthcoming peace conference, as well as the establishment of the U.N. Commission on Atomic Energy.

However, a frank conversation about the real intentions on big issues did not take place. Both sides continued to act “in the dark,” trying to maintain a free hand, while presenting the other side with accomplished facts, which promised nothing but a further erosion of trust. “The United States has been planning and taking certain measures for its own security,” Harriman stated in a memorandum written while the council was in progress. “These have not been disclosed to the Soviet Union... The Soviet Government for its part has not informed the United States of its security plans except in general terms....”²⁶⁴

Nevertheless, the conference ended to the mutual satisfaction of both sides (if one leaves out the British). One last mission lay ahead for Harriman as a result of the Moscow conference, namely, traveling to Romania as a member of the Allied commission (with Kerr and Vyshinsky) as

²⁵⁸ Conversation with Harriman, December 12, 1945 (from Maisky’s journal), AVP RF, f. 06, op. 7, d. 51, ll. 69-70.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, AP RF, f. 3, op. 66, d. 234, l. 45

²⁶⁰ FRUS, 1945, vol. 5, pp. 924, 926.

²⁶¹ “Perepiska Stalina s Molotovym,” p. 85.

²⁶² Notes Regarding Conference of Foreign Ministers at Moscow, December 18, 1945, WAHP, CF, Cont. 185.

²⁶³ The resolution on the voting procedure in the Far East Commission reached by the Council of Ministers corresponded to Stalin’s proposal put forth in the Soviet diplomatic note of October 11th, which subsequently gave the Soviet representatives in the Council an opportunity to influence its decisions. See Safronov, pp. 166-67.

²⁶⁴ Certain Factors Underlying Our Relations with the Soviet Union, December 20, 1945, WAHP, CF, Cont., 185.

consultants on the reorganization of the government. The Anglo-Saxons' misgivings regarding the futility of their mission in Bucharest proved to be completely warranted: the political situation was controlled by the Groza government, which in turn was under Moscow's control. The inclusion of two opposition ministers without portfolio (moreover, selected by the government) would not change anything. Harriman and Kerr could only listen to the entreaties of the leaders and protests of the anti-Soviet opposition, Maniu and Bratianu, appeal to Vyshinsky to adopt a "good neighbor" policy, and try to secure guarantees and dates for conducting "free" elections. They did not succeed in obtaining the latter—Groza on various pretexts evaded concrete obligations, putting them off with vague promises and vulgar jokes such as "What kind of elections can there be on an empty stomach?"²⁶⁵ But Vyshinsky nipped in the bud even these feeble attempts as he viewed such maneuvers as a departure from the resolutions of the Moscow conference. (He describes with relish in his report to Molotov how he had rebuffed Harriman's "underhanded politics.")²⁶⁶ So as not to prolong the agony, after the requisite wrangling Harriman and Kerr acquiesced to the proposed candidacies and recommended to their governments that the Groza government be recognized. The infamous end to the Romanian drama merely served to hasten Harriman's departure from Moscow. On January 20th the Ambassador presided over a farewell meeting at Mokhovaya. His final instructions to his staff were very pessimistic: "there is no settlement with Russia," but the Russians "are not strong enough" now to opt for a complete break with the Allies. The staff meeting ended with "a general discussion as to what our policy should be in the future in order to promote our interests against the Russian policy."²⁶⁷

Late evening that same day Harriman paid his farewell visit to Molotov, to whom he disclosed "in secret" his impending resignation and the fact that he had no firm plans for the future. The People's Commissar expressed his regret and the hope that Harriman, with his "great experience," would not abandon politics." The Ambassador

replied that he was not planning "to divorce himself completely from Soviet-American affairs, which had become so dear to his heart," and promised "to use this experience for the good of Soviet-American relations." "...the useful role that Harriman has played," the People's Commissar said in conclusion, "is not subject to doubt by friends of the Soviet Union and the U.S." At the end of the meeting Harriman requested a meeting with Stalin, but received the usual evasive reply about the Leader "being busy."²⁶⁸

On January 22nd, the Ambassador bid farewell to Maxim Litvinov, with whom, as was usually the case, he was more frank. And Maxim Maximovich with his usual insight quickly guessed the American's plans: "After informing me all of a sudden that Hopkins, according to his information, was seriously ill and probably dying, that there was almost nobody around Truman to continue the Roosevelt tradition and that Byrnes didn't have the experience, he gave me to understand that he would not be averse to taking the position of adviser to the President, which Hopkins held under Roosevelt. He added that in that case he was expecting to come to Moscow again." Toward the end of their conversation, Harriman, evidently hoping to elicit equal frankness from Litvinov, lamented the USSR's policies in the Balkans and asked "whether we intended to swallow up all of Europe." But Litvinov chose to play it safe. "I said that the Ambassador was probably joking and that he know all too well that we did not have any such aspirations." As he was looking over the transcript of the conversation, Molotov thickly underlined the passage about the intent "to swallow up all of Europe" and put a question mark in the margins: What did these unusually harsh words mean, coming from Harriman who was so careful in choosing his words?²⁶⁹

We do not know what precisely Molotov reported of the American ambassador's farewell conversation, but the Leader, despite his busy schedule, received Harriman for a farewell visit. The Generalissimus began with an apology: "Comrade Stalin says that he did not know that Harriman was leaving his post in Moscow, otherwise he, Comrade Stalin, would have set aside his affairs to receive Harriman earlier." The Ambassador outlined his plans for the future, but emphasized particularly that he would likely hold

²⁶⁵ Memorandum of Conversation, January 5, 1946, WAHP, CF, Cont. 18.

²⁶⁶ "Tri vizita A. Ia. Vyshinskogo v Bukharest (1944-1946)," *Dokumenty rossiiskikh arkhivov* (Moscow, 1998), p. 191.

²⁶⁷ Notes on Talk by Ambassador to Officers and Attachés of Embassy, Moscow, January 22, 1946, WAHP, CF, Cont. 186.

²⁶⁸ Reception of U.S. Ambassador Harriman, January 20, 1946, AVP RF, f. 07, op. 31, p. 031, l. 190.

²⁶⁹ Reception of Harriman, the American Ambassador, January 22, 1946 (from Maxim Litvinov's journal), *ibid.*, ll. 11-12.

a position in the government: "Now when Hopkins is so ill that he can no longer carry on political work, he, Harriman, remains one of the last links between the President and Roosevelt's old advisers." A bit later in the transcript prepared by V. Pavlov we are told that "Comrade Stalin jokingly asked how it happened that Hopkins got married and fell ill. Harriman answered that Hopkins was ill before his marriage, and that now the illness has become acute."

The conversation later turned to concrete problems in relations between the two countries. Stalin expressed his satisfaction with the decisions of the Moscow Conference, and emphasized that "apparently everything will be all right with Japan. The Soviet and American governments have found a common language on the Japanese matters." "In Romania," he continued, "it seems that both sides have displayed a sense of solidarity and the question has been virtually settled. As far as Bulgaria is concerned, the foolish opposition has doomed itself to failure." Harriman hastened to inform him that he had already recommended that his government not delay in establishing relations with Romania, and asked Stalin about the situation in China. In reply Stalin told him about his recent meeting with Chiang Kai-shek's son, "an intelligent person," in his words, who requested that Moscow mediate in the relations with the Communists. Continuing the line he had adopted for the Americans of distancing himself from the Chinese Communists, Stalin stated that the Soviet government was not certain whether the Communists would take his advice. "Comrade Stalin believes that the main thing is that the Chinese Communists disagree with the position of the Soviet Union on China. Therefore, the Soviet government, not wishing to find itself in an awkward position, does not want to assume the role of mediator." At the same time, Stalin continued in reply to Harriman's questions, there are essentially no "profound differences" between Kuomintang and the Communists, since the latter "do not advocate the Sovietization of China," but merely seek its democratization. The conversation touched on Korea as well, where friction had broken out between the USSR and U.S. representatives on the bilateral commission of the trusteeship. Stalin declared that the U.S. needed the trusteeship more than did the USSR ("after all, the proposals on Korea came from the Americans"), but now the U.S., it seemed, was beginning to find it a burden, and were making it out to be the Soviets' idea. Harriman promised to study the situation on site.

In response to the Ambassador's questions about Stalin's views on the situation in Japan, the latter replied that he believed the retention of imperial power to be a mistake ("it will attract militarists") and lamented the insufficient measures taken to demilitarize the country as well as the lack of information from MacArthur on these issues. Harriman assured him that the Soviet representatives would be fully informed of developments and that they would be consulted more often.

The conversation lagged and the Ambassador asked whether he was not detaining his host. Stalin magnanimously replied that "he and Harriman were seeing each other for the last time and that he, Comrade Stalin, was at Harriman's service." The American then posed a question about the fundamental differences between the USSR and the United States. According to the Ambassador, certain people in the U.S. believe the differences in conception to be irreconcilable. "There are differences in conception, but they concern the two countries' domestic policies," Stalin answered confidently. "As to our foreign policy conceptions, the Soviet Union and the United States can find a common path... the war has shown that the Soviet Union and the U.S. can find a common language," and that is the main thing in their relations. All that remained for Harriman was "to express his satisfaction on this point" and thank the Master of the Kremlin for all the consideration shown to him while in Moscow.

Stalin, however, had a question of his own: How realistic would it be for the Soviet Union to receive a credit or loan from the Americans, if the Soviet government were to raise the question again? Harriman answered in the affirmative, but with reservations about the timing and the expediency of examining the issue in the broad context of "a general basis for economic cooperation," including settling the Lend-Lease accounts and other problems. Stalin replied, "The Soviet government will enter into negotiations with the U.S. government, but not with the conditions advanced by the congressmen, when they returned from their trip to the Soviet Union." (He was referring to a delegation from the U.S. House of Representatives, which had met with Stalin in September, and then later published a report that outlined a number of political conditions for granting a loan to the Soviet Union.) Stalin called these conditions "offensive," and declared that the "Soviet government would simply not entertain the discussion of such conditions. If that were excluded, then the Soviet government is ready to enter into negotiations with

the U.S. government, if it is ready.” Judging by everything, Stalin still hoped to receive the American loan, but not at the price of political concessions.

In conclusion, the Generalissimus asked Harriman “to send his regards to Hopkins and his wishes for a speedy recovery. Comrade Stalin also asked to send his regards to the President.” The American transcript of this meeting blurs Stalin’s characteristic singling out of Hopkins: “Regards and best wishes to Harry Hopkins and President Truman.” Harriman saved a personal request for the last: “Could he take with him back to his country the two horses Stalin had given him? Comrade Stalin answered that of course Harriman could. The horses are his property.”²⁷⁰

Stalin apparently was pleased with his last meeting with Harriman—on his orders a detailed transcript was sent to members of the Politburo and Soviet ambassadors in the major Western capitals.²⁷¹ And Harriman left Moscow strongly affected by the mysterious magnetism of Stalin’s personality. After dozens of meetings with him over the course of four years he was still unable to find an explanation for this. As Harriman would later recall, “It is hard for me to reconcile the courtesy and consideration that he showed me personally with the ghastly cruelty of his wholesale liquidations. Others, who did not know him personally, see only the tyrant in Stalin. I saw the other side as well—his high intelligence, that fantastic grasp of detail, his shrewdness and the surprising human sensitivity that he was capable of showing, at least in the war years. I found him better informed than Roosevelt, more realistic than Churchill, in some ways the most effective of the war leaders... I must confess that for me Stalin remains the most inscrutable and contradictory character I have known—and leave the final judgment to history.”²⁷²

And Stalin’s special regard for Harriman also remains not entirely clear. The most intriguing question—how does one explain his almost warm, respectful regard for this “quiet American” in light of the fact that the Kremlin must certainly have known of the Ambassador’s concealed role and his real views as the war was ending and immediately afterwards? After all, there was a steady stream of “compromising information” on Harriman from the most varied sources: from Central Committee

informers among the American journalists in the Embassy, pro-Soviet members of American delegations that came to Moscow in 1945,²⁷³ not to mention the constant surveillance and wiretapping on the part of the NKVD (Davies had rightly warned him about the omnipresent Soviet intelligence). Moreover, the Ambassador’s growing toughness in the negotiations that took place during the summer and fall of 1945 could not have gone unnoticed. It was none other than Stalin who later spoke of Harriman as a person who “bears his share of responsibility for the deterioration in our relations after Roosevelt’s death.”²⁷⁴ And despite all of this—invariable courtesy, special signs of consideration, generous gifts. (Those same horses were not simply made a present of to Harriman, but were transported directly to Baltimore, at the expense of the Soviet government, along with a veterinarian and three experienced horsemen.)²⁷⁵ Nikita Khrushchev, too, spoke of the dictator’s “great respect” for Harriman at a meeting with him in 1959. At that same meeting Khrushchev let Harriman in on a “secret” that also spoke of Stalin’s respect for the Ambassador: “I will tell you a secret. When the war ended, the question of Petsamo arose. We seized it, but Stalin said we must pay something for the nickel because, he said, Harriman is a part owner.”²⁷⁶

Of course, completely rational reasons can be found to explain this unusual regard: Harriman was the envoy of the main ally, a person who was close to Roosevelt and later to Truman, a reliable connection with the White House (as the interception of his communications had confirmed), a man with a big future in politics in his own country. But one cannot discount Stalin’s personal liking for Harriman, his involuntary respect for a prominent and independent man, so unlike the members of his servile entourage. “When speaking with Harriman,” Anatoly Dobrynin, who had known him well, would recall, “one could be certain that he would not only meticulously convey everything to the President

²⁷⁰ Transcript of conversation between I. V. Stalin and U.S. Ambassador Harriman, January 25, 1946, AP RF, f. 45, op. 1, d. 378, ll. 88-97.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, ll. 99-104.

²⁷² *Special Envoy*, pp. 535-36.

²⁷³ On Harriman’s anti-Soviet orientation, see Geminder to Paniushkin, September 18, 1945, RGASPII, f. 17, op. 128, d. 755, ll. 24-25; on Ambassador Harriman’s opinions (a report of the Department of the Central Committee on the visit to the USSR of the delegation of KPP, October 23, 1945), *ibid.*, d. 736, ll. 194, 211.

²⁷⁴ O. Troianovskii, *Cherez gody i rasstoianiia* (Moscow, 1997), p. 161.

²⁷⁵ Memorandum for Ambassador Harriman, March 11, 1946, NA RG 59, 123, Harriman W. Averell, 1946-1947.

²⁷⁶ FRUS, 1958-1960, vol. 10, part 1, pp. 274, 277.

directly, but that he would also express his point of view, which might influence the government's decisions. Stalin understood this very well and that was why he 'fussed' over Harriman."²⁷⁷ And yet, it seems, there was something else at work here, perhaps the peculiarly Bolshevik reverence for "magnates of big capital," whom the Kremlin regarded as the true "masters of America," rather than the usual diplomats and other "hirelings" of this capital. "We would like to deal with you because you have authority. You are a master, not a lackey."²⁷⁸ This straightforward acknowledgment of Harriman's special standing, also made to Harriman in 1959 by Khrushchev, could not better convey the irresistible fascination that the name "Gospodin (Mr.) Harriman" evoked for circles of the Soviet leadership of the war generation, which continued to open the familiar doors of the Kremlin to him on his later missions to the USSR right up to the early 1980s.

And yet in 1946, this special regard had its limits. Soon after Harriman's departure from Moscow the NKID's Department for the Americas sent Vyshinsky a proposal to revive the earlier recommendation to award Harriman a Soviet decoration, which had been set aside in 1944, since the previous objections from the Americans about a "conflict of interests" were no longer an issue. It was proposed that the former ambassador (as Davies before him) be awarded the Order of Lenin—the highest Soviet decoration—with the following citation (taken from the draft of the Resolution of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet): "For his many achievements that facilitated the joining together of military efforts of the peoples of the U.S. and the Soviet Union... and his good offices in the successful resolution of numerous postwar problems, as well as his large contribution to the strengthening of friendly Soviet-American relations..." The department's staff evidently did not know which way the wind was now blowing at the "very top." "I think that we should wait with this a while. I request your instructions," Vyshinsky wrote on the memorandum, before sending it to Molotov. "This needs to be discussed," was the Commissar's reaction.²⁷⁹ The Kremlin "waited" for almost forty years. Harriman did not receive his first Soviet medal, the Order of the Great Patriotic War, First Degree, until 1985; it bore almost the same

citation: "For his great personal contribution in the establishment and strengthening of Soviet-American cooperation during the years of the Great Patriotic War." The White House recognized Harriman's services in Moscow in February 1946 with its highest honor for civilians, the Medal for Merit. The asymmetry of this recognition had its own logic, since Harriman above all had defended the interests of the United States, which by no means always coincided with the interests of the USSR. For this reason, it is difficult to agree completely with V. T. Iungbliud's conclusion that "one constant" underlies all of Harriman's actions, namely, that they were "directed at cooperation with the USSR."²⁸⁰ Cooperation for Harriman (as was the case for the Soviets as well) was far from an end in itself, but rather a means for attaining the foreign policy goals of his country.

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²⁷⁷ Transcript of the author's interview with A. F. Dobrynin, July 24, 1997.

²⁷⁸ FRUS, 1958-1960, vol. 10, part 1, p. 277.

²⁷⁹ Mikhailov to Vyshinskii, February 27, 1946, AVP RF, f. 06, op. 8, p. 47, d. 782, l. 2.

²⁸⁰ V. T. Iungbliud, *Era Ruzvel'ta*, p. 183.