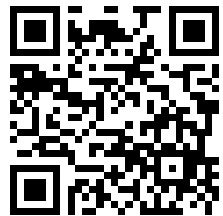

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**HISTORY OF
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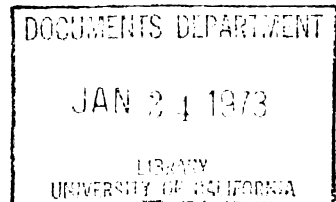
**BRITISH
FOREIGN POLICY
IN THE
SECOND WORLD WAR**

BY

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*Fellow of All Souls College
and formerly Professor of Modern History
in the University of Oxford
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Volume III



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FOREWORD

VOLUME III of this *History* was written, like the two previous volumes, from the archives of the Cabinet Office, the Foreign Office, and, where necessary, other British departments. Additional material from British, Allied or enemy sources not available for the original official *History*, or the abridged published version, has been added in footnotes.

About one half of the volume recounts the history of Anglo-Russian and Anglo-Polish relations in 1944 and 1945 before the Potsdam Conference. During this time His Majesty's Government did their best to bring about a Russo-Polish agreement which would satisfy Russian demands for security, provide an equitable frontier for Poland, and also safeguard Polish independence. These British (and American) efforts had little success, in spite of the visit of Mr. Churchill and Mr. Eden to Moscow in October, 1944, and an apparent compromise at the Yalta Conference in February, 1945. The Foreign Office was therefore bound to consider anxiously throughout these months whether the Soviet Government were intending to maintain collaboration with the Western Powers after the war. The volume contains a number of documents on the subject of such collaboration and the extent to which Great Britain could meet Soviet demands.

Volume III also covers British relations with General de Gaulle and the French Committee of National Liberation (later the French Provisional Government) from the beginning of 1944 to August, 1945. One chapter deals with Anglo-Italian relations from the liberation of Rome to the opening of the Potsdam Conference. There are chapters on relations with Yugoslavia and Greece from the German occupation of these countries in 1941 to the end of the war. As in Volume II, there is no separate treatment of Anglo-American relations since, directly or indirectly, they come into almost every chapter of the book.

I want again to say how grateful I am to those who helped me some years ago when I was writing this *History* for official use, and how much I owe to the knowledge, skill, and judgment of Miss Jean Dawson, B.Litt., of the Cabinet Office Historical Section, in revising the text and preparing it for publication.

LLEWELLYN WOODWARD

Oxford, December 1969

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FOREIGN OFFICE RECORDS

The great majority of the references quoted in this book are to Foreign Office files. These references are always preceded by a letter, indicating the department responsible for the file in question. Thus, A indicates the American department, E the Eastern, N the Northern, etc.

CABINET OFFICE RECORDS

- CA Confidential Annex (or Secretary's Standard File) to Cabinet Conclusions
- Churchill Papers. . Sir Winston Churchill's personal files in the custody of the Cabinet Office.
- JSM Joint Staff Mission, Washington
- PMM Cabinet Office printed series of Prime Minister's minutes
- WM War Cabinet Conclusions
- WP War Cabinet Papers

PRINTED SOURCES

- F.R.U.S.* *Foreign Relations of the United States*

NOTE

Throughout these volumes, footnotes are indicated in the text by numerals, 1, 2, 3, etc. The marginal notes in brackets, (a), (b), (c), etc., indicate references to sources which are printed at the foot of each page.

CHAPTER XXXVI

Anglo-American relations with the French, November 1943-June 1944

(i)

The removal of Generals Giraud and Georges from the French National Committee: the Prime Minister's protests against the arrest of MM. Boisson, Flandin and Peyrouton: General de Gaulle's visit to Marrakesh (November 1943-April 1944).

ON November 9, 1943, the French Committee of National Liberation announced a number of changes in its composition. (a) The purpose of these changes was twofold. The Committee wanted to admit representatives of the principal French political parties and of the French Resistance movements. They also wished to separate, in their own words, 'the political power from the military command'. The most important feature of these changes was that Generals Giraud and Georges ceased to be members of the Committee.

The Foreign Office were not taken by surprise at the disappearance of General Giraud from the Committee, and the consequent establishment of General de Gaulle as sole President. They regarded the subordination of the Commander-in-Chief to the civil authorities as in accordance with the French Republican tradition, and therefore bound to happen sooner or later. They pointed out that the change had been accelerated by the meeting of the Consultative Assembly in November, 1943, and the arrival at Algiers of the members of the Assembly nominated by the Council of Resistance in France. For some considerable time it had been arranged that General Giraud should preside over the Committee only when military questions were under discussion. In fact, the general had not brought any such questions before the Committee.

The Foreign Office did not think that we need object to the changes: they expected them to alarm the Americans, with the result that the President and the State Department would be less inclined than ever to deal with the Committee to which they had given only a grudging recognition. The first signs of alarm, however, came

(a) Z11607, 11608/5/69.

- (a) from the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister telegraphed to President Roosevelt that he was not at all content with the changes which left General de Gaulle sole President. The body which we had recognised was of a totally different character, and the co-presidency of Generals Giraud and de Gaulle was an essential feature of it. The Prime Minister suggested that the British and United States Governments should maintain an attitude of reserve until he and the President had been able to discuss the position together.

Mr. Eden explained to the Prime Minister the reasons for the changes. He pointed out that, according to General Catroux, there was no intention of depriving General Giraud of his position as Commander-in-Chief. The new Committee resembled a Republican French Cabinet. It was more representative than the original Committee; the former French Ministers and Resistance leaders would have more control than the old Committee over General de Gaulle, and would not tolerate him as a dictator. The position which General de Gaulle had now assumed was in accordance with the views—as known to us—of all Frenchmen who had recently come from France. Mr. Eden therefore doubted whether it would be wise—if General Giraud remained as Commander-in-Chief—for us to take a more negative attitude towards the Committee when it had now become more democratic and more representative of France.

- The Prime Minister accepted Mr. Eden's view, but the exasperation which he felt about General de Gaulle broke out again when, on December 21, the Committee announced the arrest of MM. Boisson, Peyrouton, and Flandin. These arrests were part of a 'purge' which had already included M. Pucheu.¹ The Prime Minister (b) was indignant at the arrests. He telegraphed² to Mr. Eden that MM. Boisson and Peyrouton had placed themselves in territory which afterwards, through our victories, had come under General de Gaulle's jurisdiction. The United States and, to a lesser extent, we ourselves, were responsible for their presence. We owed to M. Boisson the deliverance of Dakar. M. Peyrouton had been invited to North Africa by General Giraud with the approval of the State Department. The Prime Minister had met both these men at General

¹ M. Pucheu, an industrialist, and a member of the so-called Worms group (a group associated with the bank of that name), had been appointed Minister of the Interior by Marshal Pétain in July 1941. He was generally hated owing to the ruthless and savage methods whereby he suppressed anti-Vichy opposition, especially among the communists. According to evidence brought forward by the Gaullists at his trial, he had told Marshal Pétain as late as October 1942, that French interests required a compromise peace and not the defeat of Germany. General Giraud had allowed M. Pucheu to come to North Africa in May 1943, on the condition that he joined a French fighting unit.

² The Prime Minister was at this time at Carthage recovering from an attack of pneumonia.

(a) T1922/3, No. 498 (Churchill Papers/181; Z11607/5/69).

(b) Frozen 779 (Churchill Papers/182; Z12598.5/69).

Eisenhower's invitation; they were then rendering important services to the Allied cause at a time when the result of the battle for Tunis was uncertain. The Prime Minister had said to them, 'March against the Hun, and count on me'. He would have to make this statement public if General de Gaulle went to extremities against the two men.

The Prime Minister said that we had no specific obligation to M. Flandin, but that, having acquainted himself in detail with M. Flandin's actions over the last ten years, he thought that for the French Committee to proceed against him would be proof of their unfitness to be considered in any way the trustees of France; they would be showing themselves small, ambitious intriguers, attempting to improve their position by maltreating unpopular figures. The present House of Commons ought not to reproach M. Flandin for his telegram to Hitler after Munich because the vast majority of the Conservative Party 'highly approved' Chamberlain's action and this action 'far exceeded that of Flandin'. The Prime Minister asked Mr. Eden to consider the details of M. Flandin's ministerial record in the Vichy Government and his success in preventing M. Laval from bringing about a French alliance with Germany and an expedition from Dakar to the Lake Chad area.

The Prime Minister hoped that we should make it clear through Mr. Macmillan that 'this kind of persecution' was not likely to improve the relations of the French Committee with their British and still less with their American allies and that in certain respects we had obligations towards the persons involved. The Prime Minister (a) also telegraphed to the President that he was shocked at the arrests, and that he hoped that he (the President) would take steps to impress upon the French Committee the unwisdom of their proceedings.

The Foreign Office thought that the Prime Minister's speech of September 21 in the House of Commons was relevant to the British position in the matter. The Prime Minister, after stating that the (b) existence of a strong France was one of the most enduring British interests in Europe, had said that the French people as a whole must be left to judge the conduct of their fellow-countrymen in the terrible conditions following the military collapse of 1940. He hoped the highest honour would be given to those who remained firm in the hour of disaster, and that salutary punishment would be meted out to all prominent persons who had not merely yielded to the force of circumstance, but had tried, for the sake of personal ambition and profit, to promote the victory of the common enemy.

This statement implied that the fate of the Vichyites should be

(a) T2043/3, No. 513 (Churchill Papers/182; Z12598/5/69). (b) Z12598/5/69.

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left to a French Government constituted in accordance with the wishes of the French people as a whole after free elections had been held in France. The French Committee was, in fact, a revolutionary body; it probably represented the French people, but had no means of proving that it did so. If, therefore, we took no action with regard to the arrests, and if death sentences were passed and carried out, we could not escape a certain responsibility. Whatever the Committee might say, it would return to France with the help of Allied bayonets, and we could not divest ourselves of responsibility for its acts. We had not the slightest obligation in the case of M. Pucheu. MM. Boisson and Peyrouton had tried to 'work their passage'.¹

The Foreign Office pointed out that the Prime Minister was mistaken in thinking that M. Flandin had done anything to prevent a Vichyite expedition from Dakar to the Lake Chad area. He had been appointed Foreign Minister after M. Laval's dismissal in December 1940, and held the post until February 1941. During this time he appeared to have concerned himself mainly with Franco-German economic collaboration.

Mr. Eden saw M. Viénot² on December 22, and argued that the fate of the arrested men should not be decided until after the liberation of France. M. Viénot did not disagree. He thought that M. Flandin's case could not possibly be dealt with until after the liberation. On the other hand the case against M. Pucheu was very serious indeed. He had introduced torture into the police methods of France and had even been present when some victims were being tortured.

(a) Mr. Eden asked Mr. Macmillan to put the Prime Minister's argument to M. Massigli. Mr. Macmillan (who had received a copy of the Prime Minister's telegram) and Mr. Wilson, the United

(b) ¹ Later Foreign Office minutes on M. Boisson pointed out that he had not assisted the Allies to secure Dakar. He did not come over to the Allies until a fortnight after French opposition to the Allied forces in North Africa had ceased and an agreement had been reached with Admiral Darlan. He then (November 23) declared his allegiance to Admiral Darlan but only after satisfying himself that Admiral Darlan had received a message from Marshal Pétain stating that he (Darlan) was acting with the Marshal's approval. In fact M. Boisson had no alternative since French West Africa was at that time completely isolated from France. He still maintained his allegiance to Marshal Pétain and the 'Vichy legacy' in French West Africa was still hampering to some extent the war effort of the territory.

(c) M. Boisson, as Governor-General of French West Africa, had given the order to fire on the British and Free French forces at the time of the Dakar expedition in 1940. From 1940 to November 1942 he had persecuted and maltreated Gaullists in French West Africa. Bad treatment had also been extended to British subjects—mainly merchant seamen—interned in the territory under his control; some of these internees had died as the result of neglect and ill-treatment. On October 23, 1943, Mr. Macmillan had been instructed to send to M. Massigli a strong protest against this brutality, and a demand for the punishment of the officials concerned. M. Boisson, after attempts at denial, had admitted the truth of the charges.

² M. Viénot had been appointed on October 8 Diplomatic Representative of the French National Committee in London.

(a) Z12613/5/69. (b) Z791/1/69 (1944). (c) Z12630/5/69.

States Diplomatic Representative in North Africa, had already seen M. Massigli on the evening of December 22. They had pointed out that a matter affecting only a few men and unimportant in its relation to the war might dangerously prejudice the future of the National Committee, and that the Prime Minister and the President would feel a sense of personal responsibility towards some of the accused. The Committee ought surely to take the line that its only duty was to the legal Government of France which would be its successor. Meanwhile it had the task of collecting all material evidence and preserving the persons of the alleged criminals so that they would not escape the justice of France.

M. Massigli explained that the pressure on the Committee had come both from Gaullist and from Resistance sources. He did not think that General de Gaulle could have held out against this pressure. The Committee, however, had agreed generally that only the trials of M. Pucheu and Admiral Derrien¹ would be concluded in Algiers; the other trials would be adjourned until after the Liberation.

Mr. Macmillan thought that M. Massigli's unofficial statement (a) was a sufficient assurance that the cases of the three men, MM. Flandin, Boisson and Peyrouton, in whom we were interested would be adjourned and that the minimum measures of surveillance would be applied to prevent these men from escaping or communicating with Vichy. Mr. Macmillan thought also that we could get official assurances in the matter through ordinary diplomatic channels and that there was no need for any dramatic presentation of notes.

The President, on the other hand, had already chosen this more (b) dramatic method. He had instructed General Eisenhower to inform the Committee that 'in view of the assistance given to the Allied armies during the campaign in Africa by Boisson, Peyrouton and Flandin', they (the Committee) were 'directed to take no action against these individuals at the present time'. The Prime Minister—(c) on receiving a copy of this message—telegraphed to Mr. Eden that he felt it essential for us to support the President. The President was probably basing his action on the Clark-Darlan agreement which gave General Eisenhower extensive overriding powers in military matters. As it had been announced that the trials would be by court martial and as the accused were lodged in a military prison, there might well be a case for considering the matter to fall within the military sphere.

In a message to the President the Prime Minister said that he had (d)

¹ Admiral Derrien was in command of the French naval forces at the Tunisian ports in November 1942, and had refused to resist the German landings at these ports.

(a) Z12618/5/69. (b) Z12599/5/69. (c) Frozen 813 (Churchill Papers/182; Z12618/5/69). (d) T2052/3, No. 517 (Churchill Papers/182; Z12618/5/69).

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telegraphed to his colleagues that he agreed with the President's action. He therefore had every expectation that instructions would be given to Mr. Macmillan to support it. The actual form of the *démarche* could be discussed between General Eisenhower, Mr. Macmillan and Mr. Wilson. The Prime Minister said that our case was a very strong one. M. Boisson had saved us the cost and diversion of a major expedition to Dakar. M. Peyrouton had returned voluntarily to North Africa at the invitation of General Giraud, and his journey had been approved and facilitated by the State Department. M. Flandin had been a Vichy Minister, but he had been turned out for his opposition to German demands, and had prevented an expedition from Dakar to attack the Free French near Lake Chad.

Apart from the individuals concerned the arrests raised the whole question of our relations with France. France could be liberated only by British and American force and bloodshed. 'To admit that a handful of *émigrés* are to have the power behind this all-powerful shield to carry civil war into France is to lose the future of that unfortunate country and prevent the earliest expression of the will of the people as a whole.' We should be lending ourselves to a process of adding to the burdens and sacrifices of our troops and of infringing our fundamental principle that 'all governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed'.

- (a) The Prime Minister sent these messages on December 23. On the following day he telegraphed that he did not think Mr. Macmillan's proposal to obtain official assurances through diplomatic channels was satisfactory. Mr. Eden, on the other hand, not only disagreed with the Prime Minister's view of the previous record of the accused men, but also regarded the instructions given to General Eisenhower as extremely dangerous, since they might well result in the collective resignation of the Committee. There would then be no alternative to an administration headed by Generals Giraud and Georges and based on such support as they could get from the army. Such a development would have a disastrous effect on French morale and would probably make further co-operation with the Resistance groups impossible. It would greatly increase the danger of civil war in France after liberation and might well bring about a situation in which British and American troops would have to be diverted from their proper tasks to the maintenance of order in North Africa. British public opinion would be shocked, and we should find it hard to justify the President's action before Parliament.
- (b) Mr. Eden put these considerations generally to the Prime Minister. He pointed out that General de Gaulle could have arrested the three men months ago. The fact that no proceedings were taken

(a) Frozen 863 (Churchill Papers/182; Z12618/5/69). (b) Grand 817 (Churchill Papers/182; Z12618/5/69).

against them until the Resistance leaders joined the French Committee showed that these leaders, and not General de Gaulle, were primarily responsible for the purge and that they must be acting on the orders of the central Resistance Council in France. This Council represented most of the militant elements in France with whom we could not afford to quarrel.

It was now clear that the accused would not be tried by court martial. The President could not therefore make use of the 'overriding powers' in the Clark-Darlan agreement; in any case we had announced that this agreement was to be superseded. The procedure mentioned by M. Massigli would secure what we wanted, and we ought to act through the moderates on the Committee and not to drive them into line with the extremists.

Mr. Wilson had telegraphed to President Roosevelt his agreement (a) with Mr. Macmillan's proposals, and on December 27 the President sent to the Prime Minister the text of revised instructions to General Eisenhower. These revised instructions were that the original message should not be delivered. General Eisenhower was given another message, and told that he need not present it formally if he could obtain satisfactory assurances in informal discussion. The new message ran as follows:

'In view of the assistance rendered the Allied Armies during the North African campaign by Peyrouton, Boisson, and Flandin the United States Government views with alarm reports reaching it to the effect that these gentlemen have been charged with high treason. If, in view of the charges made, it is necessary that these individuals should stand trial, their trials should not be held until after the liberation of France, and the establishment of Constitutional Government.'

The Foreign Office thought this message an improvement though they did not expect the French to agree to give formal assurances. They felt, however, that General Eisenhower's good sense, and the influence of General Bedell Smith, Mr. Wilson and Mr. Macmillan would secure that the matter was handled with tact. They also thought it absurd to suggest that M. Flandin had rendered any assistance to the Allied armies during the North African campaign. He had merely played a political game of his own, and had been saved from arrest only by the intervention of Mr. Murphy.

The Prime Minister accepted the President's revised instructions (b) though he considered that we should ask for the three men to be released on bail or parole or kept in 'résidence surveillée'. On the night of December 31 Mr. Macmillan reported that he and Mr. (c)

(a) T2064/3, No. 425 (Churchill Papers/182; Z12711/5.69). (b) T2084/3 (Churchill Papers/182; Z1/1/69). (c) Z9, 10/1/69.

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Wilson, in agreement with General Eisenhower, had been discussing the question with members of the Committee. Mr. Wilson had seen General de Gaulle. There was no doubt that the Committee had been compelled to act under pressure from the Resistance movements. General de Gaulle had said to Mr. Wilson (i) that the examining magistrate would be unable to assemble the evidence on which to decide upon a trial until after the liberation of France, (ii) that the three men would be housed not in prison, but in a residence on the outskirts of Algiers. He explained, in answer to a question, that his statement meant that the trials would not take place before the French Committee had resigned its powers. General Eisenhower agreed with Mr. Macmillan and Mr. Wilson that these assurances should be regarded as satisfactory.

- The Prime Minister also accepted the assurances given by General de Gaulle, but continued to hold views about the services of the accused men which were not supported by the facts. He spoke at
- (a) length about the arrests when General de Gaulle visited him on January 12, 1944, at Marrakesh. General de Gaulle's answer was to show the Prime Minister a press report of a debate in the French Assembly during which all the members had asked for more severe penalties against collaborators. General de Gaulle said that he had set up the Assembly in pursuance of his democratic policy and that he must listen to its demands. He assured the Prime Minister that no harm would come to the three men until they were tried after the liberation of France.¹
 - (b) The Prime Minister also took the occasion of General de Gaulle's visit to show his disquiet at the removal of General Giraud from the Committee and to say that we and the Americans were confident that General Giraud would not allow French troops to be used to our detriment; we had not yet the same confidence in the French Committee, or, by implication, in its Head.
 - (c) The Prime Minister telegraphed to the President after this meeting that the talk had consisted mainly of a 'prolonged complaint and lecture' by himself to General de Gaulle, 'in good manners and bad French', upon the General's many follies and, in particular, his mistake in needlessly antagonising the President and himself. The Prime Minister said to the President that he was 'sorry in a way for de Gaulle', who was 'a bigger man in his own way than any

¹ On his return to England the Prime Minister enquired twice about the treatment of the accused men, and especially of M. Flandin, but there were no serious grounds of complaint. At the beginning of March 1944, the Prime Minister again asked about the treatment of M. Flandin. He said that M. Flandin ought not to be kept 'for two or three years in bondage. He is no more guilty than N. C. or E. H.'*

*Neville Chamberlain or Edward Halifax.

(a) Z774/1/69. (b) Z774/1/69. (c) T176/4, No. 559 (Churchill Papers/181; Z1041/1/69). (d) Z1674/1/69.

around him'. He was also satisfied that the General was being 'increasingly caged and tamed' by the Committee and the Assembly, and that there was no longer any danger of a 'one-man show'.¹

(ii)

Anglo-American discussions on civil administration in liberated France: differences of view between the Foreign Office and the Prime Minister: the Prime Minister's support of President Roosevelt's attitude (September 1943—April 5, 1944).

The distrust of General de Gaulle and the French Committee felt especially by the President and Mr. Hull and to a slightly lesser degree by the Prime Minister was a matter of serious difficulty in holding up decisions of urgent political importance. The Allies were now hoping to liberate France. They assumed that, as soon as was practicable after the expulsion of the Germans, the French people would have an opportunity to choose their own government and settle the régime under which this government would function. The choice, however, could not be made at once. No one could foresee how long the Germans would hold out in France. After they had gone there would be a period of administrative confusion during which the essential need would be to maintain order and secure the efficient working of the communications and other services of the Allied armies advancing into Germany. The cleavage between Left and Right, which had been one of the causes of French political weakness before the war, was now even more dangerous. The parties of the Right were associated with the defeatism and collaboration of Vichy: the supporters of the Resistance movements came mainly, though not entirely, from the Left and included, in France as elsewhere, a well organised and much advertised Communist element whose aim was to secure power after the withdrawal of the Germans. Hence the establishment of a strong provisional authority was necessary in order to prevent the inevitable outburst of popular feeling from developing into a civil war after the liberation of the country.

¹ The Prime Minister also told the President that he had been much impressed by M. d'Astier de la Vigerie (leader of the 'Liberation' Resistance movement, who had succeeded M. Philip as Commissioner for the Interior on November 9), and that M. d'Astier had said that General de Gaulle might seem unreasonable to us, but that he felt the humiliation of his country so deeply that he had an inferiority complex. It is characteristic of General de Gaulle that he should have arranged a review of French and Moroccan troops at Marrakesh in honour of the Prime Minister. Mr. Churchill and the General attended this review on the day after their conversation.

- (a) On September 8, 1943, Mr. Makins reported from Algiers that the French Committee of National Liberation had set up an *ad hoc* commission, under the chairmanship of M. Henri Queuille, to examine the conditions in which the civil administration of France would operate. The commission intended to submit the draft of an agreement to be signed by the Committee of Liberation and the British Government and counter-signed by the Council of Resistance (as the only organisation representing the various Resistance groups in Metropolitan France).¹ This draft, with a covering letter dated September 7, was in fact handed to Mr. Makins on September 9 by M. Massigli. M. Massigli said that the draft was also being given to the United States representative in Algiers, and that the proposals in it were to be regarded merely as a basis for discussion.
- (b)

The British and American Governments had already begun to consider the question of civil administration in France. The French draft—as the Foreign Office realised—gave far-reaching powers to the French Committee, and was likely to raise political issues of the greatest importance, and to meet with strong opposition, especially from the Americans. Before discussing these issues with the State Department the Foreign Office had to make the British military authorities aware of them, and to explain to the War Office that the question of civil administration in France was rapidly becoming mixed up with one of the most important questions in Europe—the re-emergence of France as a Great Power. This explanation was necessary because the War Office informed the Foreign Office on September 22 of their own views about civil administration. They envisaged a ‘military administration, staffed by American and British Civil Affairs officers, and continuing during the first six months after the liberation of French territory’. French Civil Affairs officers would be attached as liaison officers to the organisation.

(c) The Foreign Office called attention to the facts that a draft British directive already sent to Washington provided only that the Allied Commander-in-Chief should assume temporary responsibility for the civil administration, i.e. until such control had ceased to be necessary on military grounds, and that the Commander-in-Chief had received instructions from the British and United States Governments to transfer his responsibility in due course to a provisional French authority. Furthermore our draft had also laid down that, as far as possible, the civil administration to be set up under the Commander-in-Chief should be French in character and personnel, and that the Commander-in-Chief would supervise this administration through senior officers of his Civil Affairs staff. The Foreign

¹ For the Resistance movements, and General de Gaulle's relations with them, see J. Ehrman, *Grand Strategy*, V (H.M.S.O., 1956), 318–35.

(a) U4572/3851/74. (b) U4573/3851/74. (c) U4523/3851/74.

Office regarded it as most unwise to attempt to say how long this period of supervision would last.

The War Office seemed to have in mind something like an Allied Military Government in France. The Foreign Office were convinced that a plan on these lines (i.e. similar to the plan adopted for Italy) would be disastrous in liberated Allied territories and especially in France. Mr. Eden had stated on September 22 in the House of Commons that we did not intend to apply such a plan to liberated Allied territory, and that, although the Commander-in-Chief must have temporary control, our object would be to enable the democratic countries to resume their own democratic forms of government as soon as possible.

Mr. Eden on September 23 sent to the War Office a record of the (a) representations made on the subject by M. Viénot. M. Viénot had said that the French people would fail to understand why, after having lived under the Germans, they were required to live after the liberation under a foreign régime, even though it was an Allied régime.¹ Mr. Eden told the War Office that it was thus becoming (b) increasingly clear that we and the Americans would be unable to impose a scheme of our own for the administration of liberated France, and that we should have to take into account the views of the French Committee and of the Soviet Government. The Prime Minister had announced in the House of Commons on September 21 that the three major Allies had given the French Committee equal representation on the proposed 'Politico-Military Commission'.² The Prime Minister had said that the French Committee would thereby for the first time 'take their place as an equal partner with the three Great Powers'. This important development had begun the restoration of France to the ranks of the Great Powers and had lifted the French Committee above the heads of the recognised sovereign Governments of the minor Allied States. We could not possibly exclude the Committee from the framing of the administrative arrangements in France, and indeed we should probably have to modify our own proposals eventually in favour of greater French participation.

The admission of France to the Politico-Military Commission had taken on a new significance with the proposal of the Soviet Government that the whole question of the administration of liberated territory should be referred to it. There was much to be said for the

¹ M. Viénot's anxiety over the position was greater owing to the fact that the French had received from an American source a garbled version of the British proposals. The Foreign Office complained very strongly to the American authorities of this unauthorised and inaccurate communication. (c)

² See Volume II, pp. 578 ff.

(a) U4540/3851/74. (b) U4523/3851/74. (c) U4524/3851/74.

Soviet proposal, although the necessary decisions of high policy would have to be taken first by the three major Allies. These matters of policy would be considered at the Moscow Conference in October. If it were then agreed to accept the Soviet proposal, the French would thereby obtain a voice in discussing the arrangements for their own country.

There was also the fact that, although we might argue that events in Corsica¹ were not a precedent for Metropolitan France, the French Committee had been allowed not only to undertake the task of expelling the Germans from the island, but also to provide the civil administration under their own officials. Furthermore a powerful force of French troops might form part of the Allied Expeditionary Force. We could not risk a position in which British and American officers were administering in large areas of France occupied by French troops a scheme which was unacceptable to the French Committee and regarded with hostility by the population.

The French proposals were that, outside the zones of active operations, the administration should be left to French officials under a Delegate of the Committee. We had to try to persuade them that this plan did not altogether meet our needs, and to explain that there must be an initial period in which the Allied Commander-in-Chief would exercise supreme responsibility. The problem was more complicated because we had now received the draft American proposals. These proposals were even farther removed than our own from the French plan, since they assured the continuance of something like Allied Military Government until the French people had decided by plebiscite their future form of Government. We had thus to convince the Americans as well as the French, and also to avoid the danger that the Russians and the French might combine against us if our proposals were unacceptable to the latter.

For the next three months no progress was made in settling these questions of major policy. The main reason for the deadlock was that the British and United States Governments continued to take different views about the part to be played by the French Committee. The United States Government wanted the whole question of civil administration in France to be dealt with on a military basis, between military authorities, and not by negotiation with the French Committee. The Foreign Office were convinced that there was no
(a) chance whatever of persuading the French to agree to this plan. The elimination of General Giraud from the French Committee and the increased emphasis on civilian control made it entirely clear that the Committee could not deal with civil affairs in France merely as a

¹ Corsica was liberated by the forces of the Committee on September 14. The population accepted at once the authority of General de Gaulle and the Committee.

(a) U5743/3851/74.

detail in military operations. The question was discussed incon- (a)
clusively at the Moscow Conference with the Russians and then
referred for consideration to the European Advisory Commission.
At the beginning of December the State Department had largely
come round to the British view that we should have to negotiate (b)
a civil affairs agreement with the Committee as we had negotiated
agreements with the Belgian, Dutch and Norwegian Governments.
The President, however, was still unwilling to do anything which
had the appearance of giving more recognition to the Committee;
he refused to accept a compromise proposed by his own officials.

Mr. Eden hoped that the Prime Minister would try to convince (c)
the President of the soundness of the British view, but the Prime
Minister found no opportunity for doing so at the Teheran Conference.
Hence, towards the end of the year, while it was becoming in-
creasingly necessary to settle the many detailed questions connected
with the civil administration, and while the French Committee were
becoming increasingly restive that no answer had been received to
their note of September 7, the British and American Governments
were still considering these questions of high policy and were as far
apart as ever in their views, or rather a curious situation was
developing in which the Foreign Office and the State Department
were near to an agreement which the President would not accept,
and the Prime Minister not only refused to advocate the Foreign
Office view, but inclined out of distrust of General de Gaulle to side
with the President.

On January 6, 1944, the French National Committee sent notes to (d)
the British and American representatives at Algiers urging that the
two Governments should reply to the French note of September 7,
1943. The Committee pointed out that, if an agreement on the
arrangements for civil administration were not reached before the
opening of military operations in France, the two Governments
would have either to negotiate on the spot with the Vichy authori-
ties or to establish a régime of direct administration. The former
plan would gravely shock French national opinion, and lead to
serious disorders; the latter would result in confusion. In any case it
would be impossible, without great inconvenience, to improvise
measures at the last moment.

The Foreign Office were not surprised that the French Committee (e)
were showing signs of impatience. There seemed, however, at last to
be some hope of breaking the deadlock over procedure by accepting
a proposal which the State Department had made at the end of
December for discussions at an official level with M. Monnet in

(a) U6123/3851/74. (b) U6206/3851/74. (c) U6323/3851/74. (d) U177/14/74.
(e) U6700, 6701/3851/74.

- Washington.¹ Furthermore, the United States Government cleared
- (a) up one important point on January 8 in their answer to the French note of January 6. They stated that there was no reason whatever for supposing that the Government of the United States contemplated treating with the Vichy authorities. The Government of the United States had no intention of having any dealings or relations with the Vichy régime except for the purpose of abolishing it, and had no intention of dealing with any individual in France who was known to have wilfully collaborated with the enemy.
- (b) The hopes of the Foreign Office were greater for a time when they received—through Lord Halifax—the revised draft of a proposed civil affairs directive.² The terms of this draft suggested that the President had at last been persuaded to allow American and British officials to plan civil affairs with the Committee of National Liberation as the only body capable of taking over the civil administration of France. The draft laid down that the Committee would be responsible for the restoration of full representative government in France. The President, however, was still not willing to accept this provision. He wanted to ensure that the Committee would not assume power in France against the wishes of the French people.
- (c) The Prime Minister, unlike the Foreign Office, did not welcome the proposals of the State Department. He wrote to Mr. Eden on January 26 that he was not in favour at the present time of making arrangements for the French Committee to take over the civil administration in any parts of liberated France. We had no guarantee that General de Gaulle would not ‘hoist the Cross of Lorraine over every town hall, and that he and his vindictive crowd will not try to peg out their claims to be the sole judge for the time being of the conduct of all Frenchmen and the sole monopolists of official power. This is what the President dreads, and so do I.’ The Prime Minister thought that in two or three months time a ‘different atmosphere’ might well prevail on the French Committee, but that meanwhile it would be ‘most foolish for us to give ourselves over to them and thus throw away one of the very few means of guiding them and making them “work their passage”’. The Prime Minister could not understand why there was any urgency in the matter or why Lord Halifax seemed to think that we had to ‘induce’ the President to take a particular line of action.

¹ M. Monnet was in the United States for negotiations with regard to supply and reconstruction. The French Committee authorised him to discuss questions dealing with civil affairs.

² Mr. McCloy, Assistant Secretary in the War Department and Chairman of the Combined Civil Affairs Committee, gave a copy of the draft to Sir F. Bovenschen of the War Office, who was in Washington discussing arrangements for the treatment of civil affairs.

(a) U42/14/74; U465/93/74. (b) U549, 594/14/74. (c) U1086/14/74.

Mr. Eden replied on January 30 that we now had to await the (a) official communication of a revised American draft and that when it arrived he could discuss it with the Prime Minister. The Foreign Office view at this time was stated very clearly in a minute of (b) February 1 written by Mr. Mack,¹ with the agreement of Mr. Harvey. They thought that the Prime Minister was right in anticipating that the Committee might find difficulties in France. It was hard to foresee what would happen in the liberated areas. The National Council of Resistance would certainly expect a voice in the arrangements. The problem was that of the organisation of a provisional French Government outside the area under military control between the liberation and the holding of a general election. This election would not take place for twelve or even eighteen months after the liberation of the whole of France, since new electoral lists were necessary, and could not be completed until the return of the prisoners of war and the deportees. The Foreign Office had considered that we should assist the Committee and the Consultative Assembly to return to France as early as possible in order that there might be some French central authority recognised by the Allies and capable of taking control and preventing the liberated areas from falling into chaos. The Committee was the only body sufficiently known in France to justify Allied recognition as such an authority. The next stage would be the endorsement of a governing authority by the French people in the liberated areas and the establishment of an assembly of some kind to control the provisional government thus formed pending a general election. The Consultative Assembly had not yet reached agreement on this matter; if the French themselves had not decided upon the organisation they wanted, it would clearly be unwise for us to commit ourselves.

At the same time we were under an obligation to those Frenchmen who were fighting with us for the liberation of their country. They consisted of the Committee, the armed forces under their control, the organised Resistance groups in France, and the Maquis.² Outside them were the passive elements of the population—who were likely to break out into activity when our landing had taken place—and the Vichy Government. The latter was now completely under German control.

¹ Mr. Mack had returned from North Africa to the Foreign Office in the summer of 1943, and was at this time head of the French Department.

² The Maquis were distinct from the other Resistance groups. They consisted of large numbers of Frenchmen who had escaped to the mountains in central and southern France since the end of 1942 in order to evade the German demands for compulsory labour. While not regarding as militarily practicable all their plans for taking over large areas of France at the time of the cross-Channel invasion, the British S.O.E. and General de Gaulle were in close touch with them, and British officers had been sent to co-ordinate their guerilla action after the invasion had taken place.

(a) U1087/14/74. (b) Z1084/12/17.

Our obligations to the Committee made it necessary for us to bring them and the Assembly into France and give them a chance of presenting themselves to their compatriots and working out with them arrangements for the interim period before the elections. The Council of Resistance would probably dominate the Consultative Assembly as the Assembly was now dominating the Committee, but we could not disown our friends by refusing to give them an opportunity to discuss arrangements with their fellow-countrymen in France. Our responsibility for the Committee should end after we had brought them into France and allowed them this opportunity.

- (a) On February 2 the Foreign Office received unofficially the revised draft of the American directive on civil affairs. The document was given to them unofficially because the President had not yet approved its terms. Mr. Eden sent to the Prime Minister on February 9 a note embodying the greater part of Mr. Mack's minute, and proposing certain changes in the wording of the American draft in order to bring it into line with Mr. Mack's proposals. The Prime Minister replied on February 10 that he had no objection to the submission of the amendments to the State Department.
- (b) The amendments were sent—unofficially—to the State Department. Nevertheless at the end of February, in spite of their efforts, the Department had not succeeded in persuading the President to come to a decision. The President's main difficulty was that he did not want to restrict General Eisenhower to dealing solely with the Committee. Once again the Prime Minister was anxious not to hurry the President or try 'to over-persuade [him] to settle everything with the French. They are improving in their conduct, and it will always be possible to give them something; but once the thing is given, it cannot be taken back. Let time work. Concede gradually.' Mr. Eden answered this minute of February 26 three days later. He pointed out that General Eisenhower, the United States War Department and our own military authorities had been pressing for some time for a decision on the civil affairs question. General Eisenhower—like Mr. Eden—thought that there was no alternative to dealing with the Committee until a French Provisional Government could be brought together as a result of consultations between the Committee and the Resistance groups. The President had accepted this conclusion in principle; he was now hesitating over the form of words in which it would be expressed to General Eisenhower. Thus, in spite of months of discussion, nothing had been settled and, with D-day approaching, General Eisenhower could not make definite plans for civil affairs or consult with responsible Frenchmen about them.

(a) U975/14/74. (b) U1087/14/74. (c) U975, 1153, 1512/14/74. (d) U1627/14/74.

The Prime Minister had suggested to Mr. Eden that we might invite General de Gaulle to London for discussions. Mr. Eden favoured a visit of this kind, since it would strengthen the Committee and have a good effect in France, but we could not invite General de Gaulle until the directive to General Eisenhower had been settled, and the Committee had been told of the part which we intended them to play.

President Roosevelt wrote to the Prime Minister on February 29 (a) that he had been worrying over 'the tendency of all of us to prepare for future events in such detail that we may be letting ourselves in for trouble when the time comes'. He had been given 'pages and pages with detailed instructions and appendices' about France. He had redrawn the instructions with the idea of leaving to General Eisenhower sole responsibility for the maintenance of law, order and reasonable justice for the first few months after the landing in France. The President ended his letter—which also mentioned German affairs—with the words: 'I denounce and protest the paternity of Belgium, France and Italy. You really ought to bring up and discipline your own children. In view of the fact that they may be your bulwark in future days, you should at least pay for their schooling now.'

On March 2 Mr. Churchill answered Mr. Eden's minute of (b) February 29. He agreed that the invitation to General de Gaulle had better stand over for the present. There would be plenty of time to settle the question of the administration of the French liberated regions; Mr. Churchill did not wish to press the President on the point. Before Mr. Churchill had replied to the President, a telegram was received (March 3) from Lord Halifax to the effect that President Roosevelt had written his own directive about civil affairs in (c) France, and had gone back upon the proposal to deal with the National Committee. The State Department were hoping to persuade the President to change certain passages in the directive which they thought 'definitely insulting' to the French Committee, but, if they failed, Lord Halifax thought that General Eisenhower would have to telegraph to General Marshall or the Prime Minister send a message to the President.

On March 4 the Prime Minister sent to Mr. Eden a draft reply that (d) he was in agreement with the President,¹ and that for the time all his thoughts were centred on the battle. The Prime Minister also proposed to tell Lord Halifax that he agreed with the President, and thought it 'a mistake to bind ourselves to the de Gaullist French until

¹ Mr. Churchill put it thus: 'I look at it the same way as you do, but it is a long way to Tipperary.'

(a) Churchill Papers/177, U2521/14/74. (b) U1743/14/74. (c) U1745/14/74.
(d) U2521/14/74.

we see more clearly what they are going to do. There is still plenty of time before we have any liberated areas to dispose of.' Mr. Churchill suggested telling Lord Halifax that it would be a mistake for him to interfere in any way in the discussions, and that we did not intend to press General Eisenhower to send another telegram.

Mr. Eden put the Foreign Office arguments once more to the Prime Minister on March 6. He said that he disliked the proposal to tie General Eisenhower's hands.¹ The President seemed to think that General Eisenhower should handle civil affairs through anyone he could find, and not necessarily through the French Committee. Mr. Eden was sure that this plan would lead to trouble. The President also wanted an Allied military administration for the first few months. Mr. Eden asked whether we really wished to govern the French in areas not required for military operations. He repeated the Foreign Office view that our wisest course would be to enable the Committee to get into touch with the local leaders in the liberated areas and leave the French to arrange a provisional government between themselves. The more we interfered with them, the greater difficulties we should cause for ourselves in the future. The President had asked us to take over France, yet he was insisting on a line likely to have grave consequences for our policy. We had not yet seen the President's draft, and until we knew the text, we had better not express a view. We had to consider, however, the Russian aspect of the question. The Russians were behaving badly, but we were bound by the decisions of the Moscow Conference to consult them at some stage about the directive to General Eisenhower. The Prime Minister had also told Stalin that he wanted to take him fully into our confidence in regard to France, since we put the greatest value upon uniformity of action. Mr. Eden was sure that the Russians would not agree with the policy outlined in the President's letter.

The Prime Minister replied on March 7 that he was in general agreement with Mr. Eden, but that there was no need for haste. We might well find ourselves holding no more than a bridgehead. Meanwhile the President should not be hurried and we ought to see how the French Committee behaved. Their attitude to trials and purges would be a guide to their conduct in France. Mr. Eden answered on March 9 that we ought to have plans ready for the possibility that we gained more than a bridgehead. For this reason General Eisenhower wanted to get on with the planning of civil affairs with the only French authorities now available—i.e. the French National Committee.

¹ Mr. Eden seems to have meant by these words either that it would be a mistake not to give General Eisenhower powers to negotiate at once with the French Committee or that it would be a mistake to leave him to run France himself without being able to hand over the administration to the Committee.

Lord Halifax was told of the Prime Minister's view and instructed (a) not to get too closely involved in the discussions between the President and his advisers. He telegraphed on March 11 that Mr. Hull had (b) explained that the delay in reaching a decision was due to the unwillingness of the President to concede as much to the French Committee as was desired in other quarters of the United States Government. The Prime Minister replied to Lord Halifax on March (c) 13 that one of the reasons why he did not wish to press Mr. Roosevelt against his inclinations on the question of handing over French liberated territory to the Committee was that he wanted to see what would happen at the various trials in France (*sic*)¹ and whether persons to whom the British and American Governments were under an obligation were put to death. Another reason was that there was plenty of time in which to reach an agreement.

The Prime Minister had telephoned to Mr. Eden in more or less similar terms—though he had referred only to the 'trials and executions now pending'. The Foreign Office again disagreed with the Prime Minister's view. They thought it was likely that acts such as the condemnation and execution of Pucheu might well have the effect of saving many lives in France, since the French people would see that there was a French authority capable of dealing with French traitors by proper methods, and that they need not attempt to take the law into their own hands.

Lord Halifax telegraphed on the night of March 18–19 the text of (d) the directive to General Eisenhower as revised by the President. The Prime Minister wrote a minute to Mr. Eden on March 20 that he was in general agreement with the draft, and would regard it as unwise to diverge markedly from the President's view. The Prime Minister's own opinion would be strengthened if 'judicial murder' were carried out in the case of Pucheu² and other acts of vengeance were perpetrated by the French Committee which owed its existence to the exertions and casualties of the British and United States forces. Although the President's document would greatly disturb the Committee, we could not allow them to bring 'not peace but a sword' into France behind our lines.

Mr. Eden, on the other hand, told the Prime Minister that, on a cursory view, he did not like the President's document. On March 22

¹ A special military tribunal consisting of three military and two civilian judges was set up in January 1944, to try 288 persons under the penal code. On March 13 it was stated in the Consultative Assembly that the court had 165 cases under consideration. M. Pucheu was found guilty on March 11 (i) of collaborating with the enemy and furthering recruiting for the anti-Bolshevik Legion both as Secretary for Industrial Production and Minister of the Interior, (ii) of handing over the French police to the Germans. He was executed on March 20.

² The Prime Minister added a note: 'He has now been shot.'

(a) U1743/14/74. (b) U2006/14/74. (c) T542/4 (U2006/14/74; Churchill Papers/177). (d) U2211, 2385/14/74.

- (a) he replied to the Prime Minister's minute with a statement of the views held by himself and the Foreign Office. He said that we could accept the document subject to two main amendments. The chief objection was to a statement in the draft telling General Eisenhower that he 'may' consult with the French Committee, and 'may' authorise them to select and instal the personnel necessary for civil administration. The draft went on to say that General Eisenhower was not limited to dealing exclusively with the Committee. This provision would cause only confusion in French minds, since we should be unable to issue a clear statement to the French people before our operations began. They were expecting a French authority to be established in the liberated areas at the earliest possible stage; all our information was to the effect that our friends in the Maquis, the other Resistance organisations, and the French people generally were assuming that this authority would be the National Committee. If our friends in France were to be disappointed, their co-operation, e.g. in sabotage behind the German lines, would be less effective.

Mr. Eden agreed that we did not want the Committee to bring 'not peace but a sword' into France. We could ask them for an undertaking on the lines of the promise given by General de Gaulle in the cases of MM. Boisson, Flandin and Peyrouton, namely that no trials would take place until after the Committee had handed over its powers to a Provisional Government. Mr. Eden also thought that the President should be asked to delete from the draft a provision allowing General Eisenhower to incorporate in his Civil Affairs section members of the French military mission and 'other French officials'. If General Eisenhower were unwise enough to have Frenchmen of opposing ideas and loyalties at his headquarters the result would be chaotic.

Mr. Eden repeated the Foreign Office view that we should aim at the following four stages:

- (i) consultation with the French Committee and the establishment of a liaison with General Eisenhower;
- (ii) the introduction of the Committee into France in order to get into contact with local Frenchmen and agree about arrangements for the establishment of a Provisional Government to hold office until free elections could take place;
- (iii) the establishment of such a government by democratic methods agreed among the French themselves;
- (iv) the holding of free elections and the establishment of a constitutional government.

This procedure would involve the acceptance of the authority of the French Committee until the setting up of a Provisional Government.

(a) PM44/175. Churchill Papers/177/3.

It would enable us to have a clear conscience in regard to those Frenchmen who had kept good faith with us, and would at the same time provide for the restoration of order in France by democratic methods.

Mr. Duff Cooper¹ telegraphed on March 25 that the President's (a) directive to General Eisenhower seemed to be intended as a deliberate insult to a Committee which he (the President) had recognised and to which he had accredited a representative with the rank of Ambassador. Mr. Duff Cooper pointed out the advantage which this Committee had over all the other Allied Governments to which we had given full recognition. He said that, if the terms of the President's instructions became known—and a much modified version of them had already been rumoured—American prestige, which had been sinking both in North Africa and in France, would reach bottom, and British prestige might accompany it there in so far as the views of the British Government were thought to concur with those of the President. The Prime Minister proposed to send a stiff reply to this telegram. Mr. Eden pointed out, however, on April 5 that Mr. Duff Cooper was using almost the same language as the State Department who had told Lord Halifax that the tone of the President's original directive was 'definitely insulting' to the Committee.² Meanwhile the French Committee, not unexpectedly, decided to publish their own plan for the civil administration of liberated France.³

¹ Mr. Duff Cooper was appointed Representative of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom with the French Committee of National Liberation on January 1, 1944; he was given the personal rank of Ambassador. After Mr. Duff Cooper's arrival in Algiers on January 4, 1944, Mr. Macmillan ceased to deal with French affairs, but remained at Algiers as Resident Minister at Allied Force Headquarters until July 21, 1944, when he moved to Caserta.

² On March 21, 1944, the State Department issued a statement denying the 'absurd rumours' that the United States Government intended, on the liberation of France, 'to deal with the Vichy régime or with individuals directly or indirectly supporting the policy of collaboration with Germany'. The fact that American representatives were kept at Vichy for some time in order to combat Nazi designs, prevent the French fleet from falling into German hands, etc., was being 'amazingly and falsely represented' as showing American sympathy with 'pro-Axis supporters at Vichy. Every person at all informed knew that throughout the entire period just the opposite was the truth. No loyal supporter of the Allied cause would make the ridiculous charge that the United States', while fighting the Axis Powers, would 'have any dealings or relations with the Vichy régime except for the purpose of abolishing it'. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (hereafter referred to as *F.R.U.S.*), 1944, III, 659.

³ General de Gaulle, in addressing the French Consultative Assembly on the plan (March 28), said that 'France did not need, in order to determine the manner in which she would re-establish her own liberty, to consult the opinions which come to her from outside her frontiers'.

(a) U2492/14/74.

(iii)

Proposals of the French National Committee for the civil administration of France: resignation of General Giraud: President Roosevelt's refusal to invite General de Gaulle to the United States (March 31—April 24, 1944).

- (a) The French plan for the civil administration of liberated France was published on April 3; the text of the decree in which it was contained had been given to Mr. Duff Cooper and Mr. Wilson on March 30. The plan, which followed the lines of the French proposals of September 7, 1943, recognised that there must be at first a zone in which the Allied Commander-in-Chief exercised full control. The Foreign Office thought that the French proposals would require some adaptation, but that General Eisenhower could get all he required if he were allowed to accept the French Committee as the sole responsible French authority, and to negotiate with them over details for the battle zone and back areas. Unfortunately, however, no progress could be made until General Eisenhower had been authorised to open conversations with the representatives of the Committee, and the authorisation could not be given until agreement had been reached about the amendments to the President's directive.
- (b) M. Viénot came to see Mr. Eden on March 30. He said that he was troubled by reports which he had received of the Allied proposals for civil administration. If the position were left vague, and the responsibility for decisions placed on the Commander-in-Chief, the result must be either military government or confusion. The Commander-in-Chief might appoint officials of differing allegiances in differing places; the only body capable of co-ordinating these authorities would be the French Committee, but they could not agree to do so if in fact they were to be asked to allow other authorities—chosen without reference to themselves—to administer France.
- Mr. Eden explained to M. Viénot some of our own difficulties. He said—and M. Viénot agreed—that the execution of Pucheu had had a bad effect in Great Britain and the United States, since Pucheu had come to North Africa at least with the consent of General Giraud (M. Viénot denied that he had come at General Giraud's invitation). We were most anxious to avoid similar trials and executions immediately behind our lines in France as we advanced. Could the Committee make it plain that what they wanted was the liberation of France and that, while it might be necessary to arrest certain persons for the sake of security, all questions of trial should stand over until the French people had been able to decide upon their own government?

(a) Z2331, 2359/12/17. (b) Z2332/12/17.

M. Viénot said that he would be deeply grateful if he could be given an opportunity to speak to the Prime Minister (whom he had not met) on the question of an agreement with the Committee before the landing in France. The Prime Minister saw M. Viénot on April 4. (a) M. Viénot told the Prime Minister that he knew the general sense of the President's directive through articles in the press. He thought it unfortunate that the directive did not envisage recognition of the Committee as the Provisional Government of France and that it allowed General Eisenhower to treat with other French bodies. M. Viénot pointed out that the result would be disunity in France, with General Eisenhower coming in to act—against our intention—as an arbitrator in French affairs.

The Prime Minister said once more that we should have plenty of time to settle political matters since only a small part of France would be liberated at once, and this area would have to remain under the jurisdiction of the Commander-in-Chief. The French Committee had failed to obtain the confidence of the President, and he (the Prime Minister) had been deeply wounded at their attitude. He felt that General de Gaulle was not a friend of England, and showed no response to our efforts to help him. M. Viénot said that the Committee and the Consultative Assembly represented France—General de Gaulle had now been 'depersonalized'—and included some of our best friends among the French. Liberated France would look for the exercise of authority by a Provisional Government; apart from the Committee—or Vichy—there would be anarchy. After the Prime Minister had complained of the arrests in North Africa and the shooting of Pucheu, and M. Viénot had said that, if the Committee had not shown themselves ready to enforce the law, there was a risk of anarchy, the Prime Minister repeated his complaints about the attitude of General de Gaulle and the Committee. M. Viénot once again urged the importance of reaching an agreement as soon as possible. The Prime Minister said that the President was resting for two or three weeks and that he (the Prime Minister) was unwilling to disturb him. He would think over what M. Viénot had said, but the French must try to understand the President and to avoid irritating him.

Mr. Eden, who was about to go on leave, decided to send another note to the Prime Minister on the subject. This note—dated April 6 (b)—pointed out that we had heard from the President three weeks ago and had not replied to him. If we were intending to refuse to accept the Committee as the French authority through whom we would work in France, we ought to say so, and face the consequences. Mr. Eden, as the Prime Minister knew, thought that we ought to

(a) Z2444/12/17. (b) Z2459/12/17.

accept the Committee, but in this case we should state our conditions and make our arrangements now. We ought not to leave the decision about our relations with France to an American general.

The Americans were now suggesting in Washington that we were responsible for the failure to reach a decision, and that they were still awaiting our comments on the President's directive. The French—having no reply to the proposals sent to us and the Americans in September—had issued an ordinance with their own proposals. The Soviet Government were also showing an interest in the matter, and we were pledged to consult them.¹ Meanwhile the Vichy Government (and the German-controlled Paris radio) were taking advantage of the delay, and were trying to revive their authority and to work upon the French masses.

Mr. Eden therefore hoped that the Prime Minister would agree to an early decision. He gave the Prime Minister the draft of a paper for circulation to the Cabinet on the question. On April 7, in Mr. Eden's absence,² Sir O. Sargent spoke to the Prime Minister about the matter and later in the day submitted the draft of a telegram to the President mentioning the points upon which we thought that the directive should be amended.

- The Prime Minister and the President at this time considered that they had another example of General de Gaulle's high-handed action and of his indifference to their wishes. Since the beginning of the year—and indeed earlier—it had become clear that General Giraud was not proving a success as French Commander-in-Chief.
- (a) Field-Marshal Sir John Dill had reported to this effect early in January, and had said that for military reasons General Giraud's disappearance from the office would be an advantage. Mr. Macmillan also held this view, and recommended that a change should come from Allied pressure, and not from single-handed action by
 - (b) General de Gaulle. On the other hand, the Prime Minister telegraphed to Field-Marshal Dill that he did not want General Giraud to be removed at the present time 'as it would alter many balances'.

¹ Mr. Eden had said in the House of Commons on March 22 that the British and United States Governments were examining the question of an agreement with the French Committee with regard to the administration of French territory after the liberation of France. This statement brought an *aide-mémoire* from the Soviet Government protesting against their exclusion from the discussion. The Soviet Ambassador in London was informed that the British Government fully intended that the French question should be discussed on the European Advisory Commission, and that the Anglo-American discussion was merely for the purpose of producing a detailed scheme to be put before the Commission. Since France was within the theatre of operations of the Combined Anglo-American Command, it was 'only natural' that the two Governments should seek to agree on the directions to be given to General Eisenhower before consulting the Soviet Government.

² On April 7 Mr. Eden went on leave until April 24. The Prime Minister took ministerial charge of the Foreign Office during this time.

(a) F.M.D.85, Z254/1/69. (b) Tel. OZ 176, (Churchill Papers/182; Z391/1/69).

General Giraud was an honourable man 'and will not stab us in the back, which is always something'. The Prime Minister thought that a good arrangement might well be for General Giraud 'to become a kind of Duke of Cambridge with de Lattre de Tassigny¹ the local Lord Wolseley'.

Nearly three months later General de Gaulle took measures to (a) settle the matter in his own way.² On April 4 the French Committee of National Liberation issued a decree whereby they assumed general direction of the French contribution to the war and authority over the French land, sea and air forces. The President of the Committee would thus become chief of the armies with the powers conceded to the President of the Council by a law of July 11, 1938; these powers included the right of ultimate decision on the composition, organisation and employment of the armed forces, and the co-ordination of the Service departments and the French Military Missions abroad. The President of the Committee would be assisted in these duties by a Committee of National Defence.

General Giraud apparently knew nothing of this decree until he saw it in the press. On reading it, he decided at once to resign. He asked Mr. Duff Cooper on April 5 whether he could obtain (b) permission to come to England and live there as a private citizen. Mr. Duff Cooper appealed to the General not to resign. The decree of April 4 merely legalised what was in fact the situation in all democratic countries where military power was subordinated to civilian power. General Giraud, however, would not accept the argument, or rather, maintained that he had always been willing to recognise the supremacy of the Committee, but that the decree was setting General de Gaulle up as a dictator. General Giraud agreed, however, to postpone for the time sending in his letter of resignation.

The Prime Minister proposed to reply that we should welcome the (c) presence of General Giraud, and also General Georges, in England,

¹ General de Lattre de Tassigny had been imprisoned by Marshal Pétain for attempting a rising in unoccupied France at the time of the North African landings. He escaped to England in September 1943, and went to Algiers in December.

² In addition to the manifest inability of General Giraud to understand the conditions and requirements of warfare in 1943-4, one important consideration—according to French sources—in determining the action of General de Gaulle and the Committee appears to have been their wish to obtain sole control of the contacts with the Resistance groups in France. General Giraud, through the French Army under his command in North Africa, was in touch with the Organisation de la Résistance de l'Armée which had been formed after the Germans, in November 1942, had compelled the Vichy Government to disband the army allowed to France under the terms of the armistice. This military organisation was the only important section of the Resistance Movement not already in close liaison with General de Gaulle. General de Gaulle and the Committee were extremely anxious to avoid the risk of disunity among the Resistance groups at the time of the liberation of France. There is no mention in the Foreign Office papers of this consideration, but the facts may have been known to the authorities in contact with the Resistance groups, and the Prime Minister's statement that General Giraud's removal would 'alter many balances' may perhaps have some reference to this aspect of the matter.

(a) Z2517/1/69. (b) Z2438/1/69. (c) Z2500, 2501/1/69.

but Mr. Eden pointed out that General Giraud had resigned so often that he might again withdraw his resignation. On the other hand he might read the Prime Minister's message as a direct encouragement to him to resign and to come to England. Mr. Eden therefore suggested that the Prime Minister's message might be qualified by the words 'in the event of General Giraud persisting in his determination to resign'.

The Prime Minister decided not only to add a qualifying clause of this kind but also to instruct Mr. Duff Cooper to do his best to persuade General Giraud to withdraw his resignation. He said that the extrusion of the General would widen the gulf between the French Committee and the President and Government of the United States. We had hitherto regarded General Giraud as a safeguard against General de Gaulle; the latter's decision was thus a most ill-judged step which would weaken the confidence of the Western Allies in him, and make it less likely that the President would change his views about the method of dealing with the French Committee behind any front which would be established in France. General Giraud ought to wait at least until he had heard the American reactions to his proposed resignation.

- (a) General Giraud, however, resented equally strongly a second decision of General de Gaulle to appoint him Inspector-General of the French forces, and to cancel his appointment as Commander-in-Chief. He found, however, that he had little support. Mr. Murphy did not advise him to reconsider his resignation. The British and American military authorities thought that it would be better for
- (b) him to resign. Mr. Duff Cooper himself reported that, even if he could now persuade the General to accept some compromise, the arrangement would be unlikely to last. Mr. Duff Cooper also said that General de Gaulle and the Committee would prefer General Giraud to remain in some titular and nominal position, but they could not keep him as Commander-in-Chief since he was incapable of thinking beyond the military problems of 1918. General Juin and the French military authorities agreed with this view. A compromise was, however, arranged whereby General Giraud was placed 'en réserve de commandement', i.e. he remained on the active list with a small personal staff.

The withdrawal of American support from General Giraud, and the unanimity of the military authorities in North Africa thus averted what might have been another serious crisis with General de Gaulle. The matter indeed aroused little interest in Algiers, and had no adverse effect on the morale of the French Army. On the other hand, as the Prime Minister had anticipated, General de Gaulle's

(a) Z2512/1/69. (b) Z2494, 2498, 2499, 2511/1/69.

action added at an important moment to the President's distrust, and thus led in turn to another incident which had a bad effect on the General's over-sensitive temper. President Roosevelt, in a (a) message of April 8 to the Prime Minister, had said that if General de Gaulle wanted to come to visit him, he would be glad to see him but would 'adopt a paternal tone'. On the other hand, the President thought it would be a mistake to send an invitation unless General de Gaulle had previously said that he wished to come.

The Prime Minister replied on April 12 that he thought it would (b) be a very good thing for General de Gaulle to go to the United States; he added, 'but obviously you must know where you are with a man like this before you send an invitation'. The Prime Minister told the President that he had asked Mr. Duff Cooper to tell General de Gaulle that he was worried over the risk of bad relations between the General and the United States Government. The Prime Minister therefore thought that after Mr. Hull's speech,¹ which the French Committee had welcomed, it would be a very good and important thing for General de Gaulle to pay a visit to Washington and make personal contact with the President. Such contact would be helpful to British relations with the Committee since General de Gaulle would understand that the foundation of our policy was to keep step with the United States 'with whom we were sharing such great war schemes'. If General de Gaulle felt like making the visit, Mr. Churchill would suggest to the President that he should send a formal invitation.

The Prime Minister telegraphed to Mr. Duff Cooper on April 13 (c) that Mr. Hull's speech had created a new situation, and that he could act at once on his (the Prime Minister's) message to General (d) de Gaulle. General de Gaulle told Mr. Duff Cooper that he would be most happy to accept an invitation to Washington at any time. He also was most grateful to the Prime Minister for the suggestion. On April 15 the Prime Minister received another message from the (e) President saying that he would be glad to see General de Gaulle if the General asked to see him, but that he would not give him either a formal or an informal invitation.

The Prime Minister told Mr. Duff Cooper that he thought the (f) President's change of tone was a result of the dismissal of General Giraud. Mr. Duff Cooper replied that he did not think the refusal to (g) issue an invitation—though a serious difficulty—was insuperable. Mr. Duff Cooper proposed to say to General de Gaulle that in an election year the President had to be extremely cautious, and that

¹ See below, p. 29.

(a) T762/4, No. 518 (Churchill Papers/121; Z2545/12/17). (b) T795/4, No. 643 (Churchill Papers/177; U3172/14/74). (c) T796/4 (Churchill Papers/121; Z3307/1/69). (d) Z3307/1/69. (e) T810/4, No. 521, Churchill Papers/177. (f) T820/4, (Churchill Papers/121; Z3307/1/69). (g) Z3307/1/69; T829/4, Churchill Papers/121.

an invitation issued immediately after General Giraud's dismissal would cause unfavourable comment since the General was known to have been the President's choice. On the other hand the President could not be criticised for accepting a request from General de Gaulle for a meeting.

- (a) The Prime Minister answered that Mr. Duff Cooper must not 'go on apologising to de Gaulle' for the President and himself. If General de Gaulle would 'stoop so far as to enquire' through his Ambassador in Washington whether a visit from him would be agreeable, the Prime Minister would ensure—before the enquiry was made—that the answer would be favourable. Mr. Duff Cooper replied on April 18 that General de Gaulle was willing to act according to the Prime Minister's suggestion.
- (b) President Roosevelt, however, telegraphed to the Prime Minister on April 21 that owing to an accumulation of work he would rather not have an enquiry from General de Gaulle for another month.
- (c) The Prime Minister replied to the President two days later that he had hoped from their previous correspondence that the President would 'go a little further with this'. General de Gaulle, whom the Prime Minister trusted as little as the President trusted him, commanded considerable forces, including naval forces and the *Richelieu*, which had been placed freely at our use and were in action or eager for action. General de Gaulle presided over a vast Empire, of which again all the strategic points were made available to us. The Prime Minister asked whether he could send the following message to General de Gaulle: 'The President tells me that he will be very much pressed with work immediately after his return to Washington,' (the President was taking a short holiday) 'but if the French representative in Washington raises the question after the middle of May, your visit would be agreeable to him, subject, of course, to the unforeseeable events of war.' The Prime Minister hoped that the President 'would go as far as this'.
- (d) The President replied on April 24 that he had no information leading him to believe that General de Gaulle and his Committee had as yet given any helpful assistance to our Allied war effort. He thought that the 'forces including naval forces and the *Richelieu*' had been placed at our disposal 'before General de Gaulle'. It was impossible for the President to make a definite commitment, but he would not object to the Prime Minister telling General de Gaulle that a request from him towards the end of May would receive 'such favourable consideration as is permitted by the conditions then existing'. Circumstances were so often misconstrued later that

(a) T835/4 (Z3307/1/69; Churchill Papers/121). (b) T897/4, No. 527 (Churchill Papers/121; Z3307/1/69). (c) T912/4, No. 656 (Churchill Papers/121; Z3307/1/69). (d) T933/4, No. 530 (Churchill Papers/121; Z3307/1/69).

the President would not have it said by the French or by British and American commentators that he had invited General de Gaulle to visit him in Washington. 'If he asks whether I will receive him if he comes, I will incline my head with complete suavity and with all that is required by the etiquette of the Eighteenth Century. This is farther (*sic*) than the great Duke would have gone. Don't you think so?'

In view of this answer the Prime Minister decided that for the time he could do nothing more. He told Mr. Duff Cooper that the (a) execution of M. Pucheu and the dismissal of General Giraud had raised difficulties, and that he had better wait before raising the question of a visit by General de Gaulle to the United States.

(iv)

Further Anglo-American discussions over the question of civil administration in liberated France: Mr. Hull's broadcast of April 9: the President's refusal to modify his directive: the Prime Minister's unwillingness to try to secure changes in the directive: British proposal to hold the directive in suspense (April 6–May 3, 1944).

On the night of April 7–8 Lord Halifax reported the text of a (b) broadcast which Mr. Hull intended to deliver on the evening of April 9. In this broadcast Mr. Hull would say that the United States Government were disposed to see the French Committee 'exercise the leadership to establish law and order under the supervision, while the military exigency lasts, of the Allied Commander-in-Chief'. The Committee had given assurances that it wished the French people to exercise their own sovereign will as early as possible in accordance with French constitutional processes. The Committee was not the Government of France, and the United States Government could not recognise it as such, but in accordance with this understanding of mutual purposes it would have 'every opportunity to restore civil administration and [American] co-operation and help in every practicable way in making it successful'. The Committee had been a symbol of the spirit of France and of French resistance, and the United States Government had co-operated with it in all the military phases of the war effort, including the furnishing of arms and equipment to the French forces.

The Prime Minister wrote a minute to Sir A. Cadogan on April 8 that the Committee would not like this broadcast, but that we should see what they said about it before we expressed any opinion. Our action would probably take—to some extent—the form of

(a) Z2984/1/69; Churchill Papers/121. (b) U2972/14/74.

defending the declarations of the President and Mr. Hull while at the same time obtaining from them certain 'mitigations'.

- (a) Three days later the Prime Minister wrote another minute to Sir A. Cadogan and Mr. Law referring to Mr. Eden's minute of March 22, and saying that Mr. Hull's broadcast had modified the directive to General Eisenhower and that it was now closer to our
- (b) proposals. The Prime Minister, after discussion with Mr. Law and Sir A. Cadogan, telegraphed to the President on April 13 that we were in full agreement with Mr. Hull's declaration, and that the Foreign Office and State Department could discuss any modification which might now be necessary in the directive. The Prime Minister thought that in the first phase of the invasion there would be no opportunity for French civil government to function, and that it might be some time before we had advanced far enough to be clear of what the French in the last war had called 'the zone of the armies', i.e. an area extending at times fifty miles from the front. The Prime Minister agreed that General Eisenhower should have full freedom of action and that no disturbing political agitation should be allowed until we had advanced well inland.
- (c) The Foreign Office drew up draft telegrams to Lord Halifax containing our proposed alterations in the directive to General Eisenhower and a covering instruction from the Prime Minister that we were now agreed upon giving the French Committee (in Mr. Hull's words) an opportunity to exercise the leadership in the establishment of law and order under the authority of the Supreme Allied Commander while the military exigency lasted.

As regards future procedure, we assumed that after we and the United States Government had finally agreed upon the terms, the revised draft would be communicated to the Soviet Government. The document would then have to be considered—in view of Soviet insistence—on the European Advisory Commission. We wanted this consideration to take place as soon as possible, and would press the Soviet Government to give immediate instructions to their representative in order to avoid further delay.

We did not think it wise to make any formal communication or issue any invitation to the French Committee until after the discussions with the Russians on the European Advisory Commission. We would have liked to capitalise the good impression which Mr. Hull's declaration had left by approaching the French Committee, but owing to our own and the American commitment at the Moscow Conference, and in the interest of the general policy of collaboration with the Soviet Government, we regarded it as essential to try to

(a) U3172/14/74. (b) T795/4, No. 643 (Churchill Papers/177; U3172/14/74).
 (c) U3172/14/74.

secure prior Russian agreement to the broad outlines of the directive.

We felt strongly that, after the European Advisory Commission had considered the directive, we and the United States Government should send a cordial message to the French Committee giving the main terms of the directive and notifying the Committee that the Supreme Commander had been authorised to receive a French military mission at his headquarters in order to discuss with them detailed arrangements for civil affairs. We might ask the French Committee to instruct General Koenig¹ to head this mission.

The Prime Minister, however, was unwilling to send our proposed (a) amendments to Lord Halifax until he had received a reply from the President to his message. He told Sir A. Cadogan on April 14 that there was no hurry about the matter. It was reported that Mr. Hull's broadcast had been well received by the French: 'We certainly do not want to be more Free French than the Free French.' Sir A. Cadogan replied on April 15 that the Prime Minister should know that we were under strong pressure from the Americans to give our comments on the President's draft directive. Mr. Stettinius had said to Mr. Eden on April 11² that the next step was for us to give the Americans our comments; he asked that we should do so as soon as possible. We had also heard from Lord Halifax that Mr. Hull was very anxious to go ahead. We had to consult the Russians before issuing definite instructions to General Eisenhower, but we could not do so until we had reached agreement with the Americans.

Mr. Law went to see the Prime Minister at Chequers on April 15, (b) and persuaded him to agree that the President's directive should be amended to bring it into line with Mr. Hull's speech. The Prime Minister said that he had not understood the draft telegrams to Lord Halifax which Sir A. Cadogan had sent to him on April 13. He wanted now to see the directive and the amendments to it suggested by the Foreign Office. Sir A. Cadogan sent these documents to the Prime Minister on April 16.

Meanwhile on April 13 Sir A. Cadogan had also reported to the (c) Prime Minister that M. Viénot had expressed general gratification over Mr. Hull's declaration but that he had mentioned two points. One of them was that Mr. Hull's words that the Committee would exercise leadership to establish law and order 'under the supervision

¹ General Koenig, who had commanded the Free French troops in the Libyan campaign, was appointed in February 1944 to the command of the French Forces of the Interior (the united armed forces of the Resistance). At the beginning of April 1944 he was appointed French Military Delegate in London and chief military liaison officer with General Eisenhower for purposes connected with operations based on the United Kingdom.

² Mr. E. R. Stettinius was Under-Secretary of State. For his visit to London, April 7-22, 1944, see Volume V, Chapter LXIII.

(a) U3581, 3238/14/74. (b) U3238/14/74. (c) U3581/14/74.

of the Allied Commander-in-Chief' seemed to imply a general Allied control in France. The other point was about Mr. Hull's statement that 'the Committee is, of course, not the Government of France, and we cannot recognise it as such'. M. Viénot said that the Committee had never made any such claim, and that Mr. Hull's remark, though accurate, gave a grudging appearance to an otherwise satisfactory declaration. Sir A. Cadogan thought that, if the Prime Minister intended to issue some declaration endorsing Mr. Hull's statements and explaining our own attitude, he might care to know M. Viénot's comments.

The Prime Minister replied on April 16 in a somewhat angry minute. He wrote that for reasons of which Sir A. Cadogan should by this time be well aware he did not intend 'to go at all beyond Mr. Hull's speech but, on the contrary, to close up to the new line he has now occupied and to persuade the President to the appropriate amendments in his directive'. He would not 'contradict or whittle away' the statement (about the Committee) which was the President's own handiwork. The Prime Minister thought that there was nothing in M. Viénot's observations. General de Gaulle had 'got off very well', especially after Pucheu, Giraud, etc. It would be a 'very bad moment to ruffle the Americans. The French have shown the worst side of their characters all this war. There is hardly one for whom we can feel a sense of respect. I fear they will be our bitter foes at its close.'

- (a) Meanwhile in the Foreign Office Mr. Harvey and Mr. Mack had had a very satisfactory conversation with Mr. Matthews.¹ Mr. Matthews said that Mr. Hull's speech expressed the real intention of the President's directive, and that the only important difference between us and the United States Government was that the latter were less confident that the French Committee would be able to establish its authority in France. Mr. Stettinius had also told Mr.
- (b) Eden that he did not expect the United States Government to object to the substitution of 'should' for 'may' in the clause referring to consultation with the French Committee.

- (c) In spite of these assurances, the situation in which the Foreign Office, the State Department and General Eisenhower were pressing urgently for a decision now became even more confused owing to the action of the President. On April 17 Mr. Stettinius gave Sir A. Cadogan the text of two messages from Mr. Hull. In the first of these messages Mr. Hull agreed with the British suggestion that the text of the directive should not be communicated to the French, but that our two representatives in Algiers should give a cordial invitation to

¹ Mr. H. F. Matthews was a senior officer of the State Department.

(a) U3171, 4022/14/74. (b) U3171/14/74. (c) U3387/14/74.

the French Committee to send a representative to London for discussions. Mr. Hull advised Mr. Stettinius to impress upon the British Government the desirability of proceeding immediately upon the basis of the President's directive of March 15 without any change of wording. No change could be made without the approval of the President (who was away from Washington) and from past experience Mr. Hull feared that any suggestion of a change would throw the question open again with the result that General Eisenhower would have no opportunity of making the necessary arrangements. Mr. Hull also thought a change of wording unnecessary because the directive would obviously permit the accomplishment of everything which the British and Americans thought necessary and, if worked on the lines of Mr. Hull's speech, would also be acceptable to the French. In the second telegram Mr. Hull said that the President's opinion was that General Eisenhower should have complete discretion in the matter of civil government, since circumstances would differ so much in different areas. Hence the President disapproved of substituting 'should' for 'may' in the provision regarding consultation with the French Committee.

Sir A. Cadogan sent these telegrams to the Prime Minister at once. The Prime Minister said that he wished to think over the matter further before taking action on them. The Prime Minister also had to consider the opinion of the Canadian Government expressed by Mr. Mackenzie King that on political grounds the directive should (a) be modified to allow a more prominent place for the French Committee as the only body which could be used to organise civil administration in France.

The Prime Minister wrote a minute on April 20 to Lord Cranborne, who had urged him to accept the Canadian view. He said that he was discussing with the Foreign Office certain amendments to bring the President's directive into line with Mr. Hull's speech. We were announcing our agreement with this speech, and the French in Algiers had expressed general satisfaction with it. It was clear, however, that the President did not want to alter his directive. There might be a difference of opinion between the President and the State Department, and Mr. Hull might have gone a little beyond the President's intention. The President might also have been stiffened in his attitude by the dismissal of General Giraud. At all events he had indicated that he would not accept the kind of amendment for which we were asking.

The Prime Minister said that it would be a great mistake for him 'to have a row with the President on these small points for the sake of the Free French, and especially to appear to take sides with the

(a) U2977/14/74. (b) U3710/14/74.

State Department against him'. The Prime Minister expected that Mr. Hull had already had an argument on the question with the President, and would discuss it with him again on his return. He (the Prime Minister) did not want to get mixed up in this 'family affair'. He might decide, after consulting the War Cabinet, to leave the matter at our acceptance of Mr. Hull's statement and to let the American and French authorities settle between themselves the form of the directive. Or he might suggest certain amendments without pressing them to the point of friction with the President. He obtained a large number of very favourable and friendly decisions from the President every week and did not want to spoil their relationship. On the other hand he thought that Mr. Mackenzie King might well approach the President directly or through the Canadian Ambassador at Washington. In any case the Prime Minister did not regard the matter as of great importance since, as he had pointed out, we were unlikely to obtain a bridgehead larger than the 'zone of the armies' in the last war. General Eisenhower would have to control this zone in a military capacity since it would very largely be a battlefield.

- (a) The Prime Minister had also spoken about the matter to Mr. McCloy, whom he had invited to luncheon. He did not report this conversation directly to the Foreign Office.¹ According to Mr. McCloy the Prime Minister had said that he would have been prepared to accept the President's directive, but that the policy which it laid down was not entirely endorsed in the country, and the Foreign Office were still insisting on certain changes.

- (b) Mr. McCloy had emphasised the urgency of reaching an agreement. On General Eisenhower's authority General Bedell Smith, on April 19, had already taken an important step by inviting General Koenig to an informal talk. He had told General Koenig that S.H.A.E.F.² wanted to open discussions at once with the French Military Mission in London on the collaboration of French civil and military authorities. All problems concerning the immediate future—even those involving civil matters—were linked with military operations, and should therefore be dealt with on a military basis and with a military mission. General Bedell Smith realised that the French Military Mission would require certain advice and assistance

¹ Sir A. Cadogan had not heard of it until the Foreign Office on April 23 received an account given by Mr. McCloy to Sir F. Bovenschen at the War Office. The Prime Minister, however, referred to it in a telegram of April 23 to Mr. Duff Cooper. In this telegram the Prime Minister said that Mr. McCloy had argued that Mr. Hull's speech and the President's directive meant the same thing. The Prime Minister had answered that it would be hard to uphold this argument if any regard were paid to the meaning of words.

² S.H.A.E.F.: Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force.

(a) U3635/14/74. (b) U3710/14/74. (c) T924/4 (Churchill Papers/177; U2492/14/74)

from French civil experts, and that the French Committee had appointed a delegate with responsibility for problems concerning civil affairs. He assumed that, while it was necessary in the first stage to hold the discussions through the Military Mission, the latter would be reinforced by the necessary 'technical civil elements'. This action of General Eisenhower in authorising conversations with General Koenig on a military level was approved by the Combined Chiefs of Staff subject to a reservation—with which the Foreign Office concurred on April 23—that all transactions with the French must be 'tentative' pending an agreement between the British and United States Governments on a 'civil affairs formula' for France. (a)

Mr. Eden thus returned from leave on April 24 to find a confused and unsatisfactory situation. He had asked on April 21 what progress had been made, and, on hearing of the delays, had said that it was impossible to accept the directive without amendment, and that he would discuss the whole question with the Prime Minister. Meanwhile the Foreign Office were beginning to think that the only practicable solution might be to have no directive, but to follow up General Bedell Smith's informal talk with an invitation to the Committee to discuss matters with S.H.A.E.F. through General Koenig's mission. The Americans might be persuaded to include in the invitation a reference to the French Committee taking the lead in the reorganisation of civil administration, as stated in Mr. Hull's speech. We might thus begin with an agreement between S.H.A.E.F. and the French delegation and get the Americans later to give it a more formal character. (b)

Mr. Eden realised that there were difficulties in this plan. The Americans might regard a formal directive to General Eisenhower as essential. They also tended to overlook the need for Russian agreement, though they had shown their draft directive to the Russians. A working military agreement would merely postpone decision on such matters as bringing the Committee back to France. If it turned out that the Committee had no rivals in the field, and the Allied Command went further in their collaboration with it, the results would be satisfactory, but there were many risks. Furthermore S.H.A.E.F. would lose the advantages—which they would otherwise get—of full recognition in advance of the rôle which the Committee would play. We should also be in a difficult position with the Russians, and anyhow the latter might show the directive to the French. We also had to consider that other documents had already been drafted by the Americans on the basis of the President's directive—e.g. a draft financial directive which gave the Commander-in-Chief powers at least equal to and probably exceeding those

(a) U3709/14/74; Z2985/1/69. (b) U3635/14/74.

allowed by international law to the commander of a force occupying conquered enemy territory, and did not mention the need for co-operation with the French Committee.¹

- (a) On April 23 the Prime Minister sent Mr. Eden a minute to the effect that he had only just seen his minute of April 5, and that he now thought it very unlikely that the directive would be changed. Mr. Hull wanted us to allow it to be issued in its present form. The Prime Minister said that he had not yet decided whether to press for our amendments to bring the directive up to the level of Mr. Hull's speech. Meanwhile, as the matter had been in his (the Prime Minister's) hands during Mr. Eden's absence, he had telegraphed to Mr. Duff Cooper a summary of the position.
- (b) This telegram was not in fact sent until April 23. The Prime Minister regretted Mr. Duff Cooper's description of the directive as deliberately insulting to the French and said that Mr. Hull and Mr. McCloy were arguing that the former's speech and the directive meant the same thing. The Prime Minister told Mr. Duff Cooper that he was still uncertain whether he would press for our amendments.
- (c) Mr. Duff Cooper replied on April 24 that from the French point of view he was justified in his description. The Committee regarded themselves as heirs of the French Government which had declared war on Germany with us in 1939. They had continued in this capacity to fight with us, and now represented all French parties except Vichy. They thus had no rivals except Vichy for the votes of the French people. The instructions to General Eisenhower to treat with any authorities he might choose must therefore appear to the Committee as an insult which could hardly have been unintentional. The Committee now believed that Mr. Hull's statement had created a new situation. If this were not so, the position would be very serious. Mr. Duff Cooper thought that we were in danger of driving our European friends in the direction of the Russians, and that, after sacrificing their friendship and the hegemony of Europe out of loyalty to the United States, we might find the latter returning to a policy of isolation.
- (d) On April 24 Mr. Stettinius and Mr. Winant again argued strongly with Mr. Eden against trying to secure a revision of the President's directive. Mr. Eden therefore thought that we should have to fall back on the plan of keeping the directive in suspense. We should say to the Americans frankly that we disagreed with it, and that we proposed, for the present, to do nothing more than give the French

¹ See note at end of this section.

(a) U3708/14/74. (b) T924/4 (U2492/14/74; Churchill Papers/177). (c) Z3307/1/69; U2492/14/74; T958/4, Churchill Papers/177. (d) U3709/14/74.

an invitation—from the British and United States Governments—to send a representative to London to carry on discussions with General Eisenhower. We could tell the Russians what we were doing and announce that General Eisenhower was negotiating with a representative of the French Committee.

Mr. Eden saw the Prime Minister on the evening of April 24 and, on the following day, wrote a minute confirming his support of this plan. He suggested that the Prime Minister might send a message to the President, since he had already told him that the Foreign Office wanted to propose some amendments to the directive, and since there might be some friction between Mr. Hull and the President over Mr. Hull's declaration. Mr. Eden gave the Prime Minister the draft of a message to the President.

The Prime Minister, however, after further conversation with Mr. Eden, decided to say nothing to the President about the directive, but to authorise Mr. Eden to make a statement in the House of Commons on May 3 that we were in agreement with Mr. Hull's declaration, and that conversations were taking place between General Eisenhower and the French military mission under General Koenig with a view to working out detailed arrangements. This statement would be made in answer to a parliamentary question; we should also say—in answer to a supplementary question—that the French authority with which we should deal in France would be the French Committee, and that we knew of no other French authority except Vichy, with whom we had no intention of dealing.

The Prime Minister's own opinion was made clear on April 28 in a telegram in reply to Mr. Duff Cooper's telegram of April 24. (a) The Prime Minister said that neither he nor the President had recognised the French Committee 'as being France or as the heirs of the French Government which declared war on Germany in 1939'. They thought that there was 'a great deal more in France' than was represented either by the Vichy Government or by the Committee. The Prime Minister said that there was no question of the Americans withdrawing the 'insulting' directive. Mr. Hull had clearly decided to pretend that his speech was the same as the directive. The speech was public, and we had already announced our adherence to it. The directive was secret; we might ask for verbal amendments to it, but the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden had thought it better to do nothing. The instructions from the Combined Chiefs of Staff to General Eisenhower that he might hold conversations with General Koenig covered all that was immediately necessary. The Prime Minister did not think there would be any administrative work for the French to do until we had secured a really large bridgehead.

(a) Z2984/1/69; U2492/14/74; T983/4, Churchill Papers/177.

Note to Section (iv). The question of the currency in liberated France.

- (a) The question of the currency to be used in liberated France was a matter upon which General de Gaulle and the French Committee had strong feelings. This question had been solved in the case of Allied countries with recognised governments by an arrangement under which the latter provided new bank notes for the use of the liberating forces. The British Government were prepared to allow the French Committee to issue notes for France but the Americans—following the wishes of the President—refused their consent. Since it was necessary for operational planning to have a supplementary currency available, the British Government had to agree to the printing of so-called ‘supplemental francs’ in the United States. These francs were completely ‘neutral’ in character; the President refused even to permit the words ‘République française’ to appear on them. The Americans maintained that M. Monnet had agreed in Washington to the printing of the notes, although he had not been speaking officially for the Committee. It was impossible—in the latter part of May—to produce in time an alternative currency to these ‘supplemental francs’. The notes would also have to be proclaimed as legal tender by General Eisenhower, though the British authorities were hoping to cover this action by a supporting proclamation from the French Committee. General de Gaulle was particularly angry at the issue of these notes: he described them as ‘counterfeit money’ infringing the prerogatives of the French State. He refused to support them by decree or even to recognise the ‘vignettes’, in his phrase, as possessing any legal value. He finally agreed to settle the matter within the framework of a Lend-Lease agreement which was made to the advantage of France. The Provisional Government was recognised as the issuing agency of the ‘supplemental francs’, and then put at the disposal of the Allies all the currency needed by them.

(v)

Further attempts to persuade President Roosevelt to allow the negotiation of a Civil Affairs agreement with the French National Committee: assumption by the Committee of the title of ‘Provisional Government’: invitation to General de Gaulle to come to England for discussions (May 4–June 3, 1944).

The decision to leave the terms of the directive to General Eisenhower in suspense and to invite the French Committee to send a representative for discussions in London did not settle the political issues involved or bridge the difference between the views of the Foreign Office and those of the President. General Eisenhower had

(a) U5199/14/74.

asked for authority to open detailed discussions with the French (a) Military Mission, and the Foreign Office had agreed with the draft of an American reply giving him authority to make working arrangements with the French on a tentative basis.

For some days, however, this authorisation was not sent; the Foreign Office then heard that the President had again intervened in the matter. The result of this intervention was only too clear. The terms of General Eisenhower's instructions were now modified to read as follows:

'Until there is combined agreement on the civil affairs formula for France, all conversations, working arrangements and agreements with the French Committee must be tentative. It must be made clear to the French National Committee that your arrangements with them do not preclude consultation with and assistance from the other elements of the French people with whom you may feel it necessary or advantageous to deal while your forces are in France.'

This revised draft was communicated to the Foreign Office on (b) May 4. The Foreign Office regarded it as wholly unacceptable. The President was now trying to bring in again the point in his original objective to which we had refused to agree. Mr. Eden considered the new draft 'intolerable' and Mr. Harvey noted that, if the President were determined to wreck American-French relations, we ought to refuse to follow him. We should send a counter-draft to Washington, and, at the worst, if no agreement had been reached before the invasion, we could hope that no alternative to the supporters of the French Committee would be found and that General Eisenhower would therefore be compelled to deal only with them. This plan was untidy and illogical, but it seemed impossible to move the President from his obstinacy.

Lord Halifax had telegraphed on the night of May 4-5 that Mr. Hull had spoken to him of the difficulties which might develop with the President if we proceeded on the basis of his (Mr. Hull's) speech rather than on the basis of the President's directive. Mr. Hull spoke very strongly about the President's hostility to General de Gaulle, and asked Lord Halifax to represent privately to Mr. Eden the importance of the Prime Minister keeping in close contact with the President on the whole question of French affairs.

The Prime Minister's only comment to Mr. Eden on the new American draft was 'Please note'. Mr. Eden, however, sent the Prime Minister a minute on May 8 to the effect that we could not agree to the draft, and that we should suggest as an alternative the following words: 'Working arrangements and agreements reached by you [i.e. General Eisenhower] with the French Military Mission

(a) U4201/14/74. (b) JSM37.

as a result of your conversations shall be regarded as tentative until approved by the United States and United Kingdom Governments, through the Combined Chiefs of Staff, from the point of view of broad policy'. Mr. Eden gave the Prime Minister a copy of Lord Halifax's telegram with the comment that—as the Prime Minister had feared—the President was not in line with Mr. Hull. Mr. Eden thought that it would be unwise at the moment for the Prime Minister to send another message to the President on the question; the best plan would be to leave it to be dealt with by the Chiefs of Staff.

- (a) Meanwhile on May 6 M. Paris¹ had called at the Foreign Office and had said that the discussions between the French and General Eisenhower's representatives were making fair progress on technical questions, but that he and General Koenig were much disturbed that General Eisenhower seemed unwilling to conclude a comprehensive settlement covering all the matters under discussion. General Koenig would have liked a document resembling our other civil affairs agreements and concluded as between General Eisenhower and himself. He did not think it possible to settle the arrangements without a comprehensive document admitting the status of the French Committee.

The Foreign Office held a similar view. Mr. Eden therefore addressed another minute to the Prime Minister on May 8 that we had to make up our minds whether we were prepared to work out plans with the French Committee on the basis that we would deal with them as the authority in France when sufficient areas had been liberated to make civil administration possible. Mr. Eden was himself definitely pledged on this issue in his statement to the House of Commons. Moreover there was no other authority with whom we could deal. We must therefore try to obtain the agreement of the Combined Chiefs of Staff on the necessary instructions for General Eisenhower. It was clear that the attitude of the United States Chiefs of Staff was determined by the strong feelings of the President. The Chiefs of Staff seemed to have been about to give the 'all clear' when they were pulled up by the President.

If General Eisenhower were instructed to deal with the Committee, we should be in a position to submit a draft civil affairs agreement for negotiation between him or a member of his staff and General Koenig. The final settlement would be dependent on making some arrangement for communications between Algiers and London, in spite of the 'secrecy' ban in force until the invasion.²

¹ M. Paris was, after M. Viénot, senior French diplomat representative in London with the rank of Counsellor.

² This ban on communications was imposed from midnight on April 17-18.

(a) U4192/14/74.

Mr. Eden said that he would send the Prime Minister another minute on the question of communications. In this minute (May 9) (a) Mr. Eden said that it would clearly be impossible to get any results from the discussions between General Eisenhower and General Koenig unless we could make some concession to the French in this matter. M. Viénot had been suggesting to General Koenig that he should offer to give his word of honour that he would use one single French cypher which no one else would be allowed to use, and that he would limit his messages to his discussions with General Eisenhower. General Koenig, however, felt unable to put this proposal to us without authority from Algiers, and M. Viénot could not be sure that he would get such authority. M. Viénot said that, owing to lack of news due to the ban on communications, the French Committee had been in a state of isolation which accounted partly for General de Gaulle's speech.¹ They had had no news of the efforts we had been making on their behalf. They had only messages from Washington implying that the difficulties over the Eisenhower-Koenig conversations were due to the Prime Minister's interference. M. Viénot had thought of asking us whether we would allow him to go to Algiers to try to induce reason in the Committee. He realised, however, that the fact of his journey would almost certainly become known, and cause embarrassment to us *vis-à-vis* other Governments. He therefore suggested sending M. Paris.

Mr. Eden put this proposal to the Prime Minister. He thought that the French were in a special position with regard to our ban on communications since their representatives were discussing a joint operation with us but were cut off from their own headquarters. As an alternative Mr. Eden thought that we might approach the Committee in Algiers through Mr. Duff Cooper. M. Paris, however, would have more influence with the Committee.

In a second minute of May 9 Mr. Eden wrote that, if the President could be brought to consent to the negotiation of a civil affairs agreement with the French National Committee, it might be best to send someone from England, with an officer of General Eisenhower's staff, to discuss the matter in Algiers. Mr. Eden repeated his view that if the President continued to refuse to make an agreement, there would

¹ General de Gaulle, in a speech at Tunis at the celebration of the anniversary of the end of the Tunisian campaign, asked for a recognition of 'French realities' which would alone serve as the basis for practical arrangements enabling the armies to concentrate after landing in France on their essential strategic tasks. General de Gaulle regretted all the more that the interruption of communications between the Committee and their representatives in London created a situation in which it was manifestly impossible to settle anything on the subject. In his speech General de Gaulle mentioned the British and American armies only once, and, in talking of the future, hoped that France would be a centre of direct and practical co-operation in the west, and a permanent ally of Russia.

(a) Z3184/2870/17.

be a real estrangement between us and the French Committee. No one—except the Russians—would gain from this state of things and the position of our own friends among the French in relation to General de Gaulle would be weakened.

- (a) The Prime Minister replied on May 10 that we ought not to quarrel with the President through fear of offending General de Gaulle. 'De Gaulle, for all his magnitude, is the sole obstacle to harmonious relations between Great Britain and America on the one hand, and the skeleton and ghost of France on the other.' The Prime Minister thought that the General's speech in Tunis showed what use he would make of power. 'He will be the bitterest foe we and the United States have ever had in France.'

The Prime Minister said that Mr. Eden did not seem to take sufficiently into account two facts: (i) the French had no troops (though they had two cruisers) in the operation, and (ii) it was unlikely that there would be a large zone of territory available until a considerable time for the French Committee to administer. Hence the question of an agreement was not urgent. The Prime Minister was willing to discuss the matter with Mr. Eden, but we must obtain the consent of the President to any action. 'In de Gaulle we have a very hostile man without any forces worth speaking of trying to thrust himself into the centre of vast and deadly affairs and calling himself "France". On the other hand we have France with all her glories and miseries. This topic is certainly worthy of conversation between us.'

On May 12 M. Viénot again suggested that M. Paris might be sent to Algiers. Mr. Eden said that it was impossible for us to make any exception to our ban on communications. M. Viénot also suggested that if, as he understood, General Eisenhower was to make a proclamation in the event of an Allied landing in France, a message from General de Gaulle might be included in it. He also thought that it would be of the greatest value if the Prime Minister himself could speak to the French people, a few days after the landing, as he had spoken to them in October 1940.

- (b) Meanwhile Mr. Duff Cooper, in a telegram of May 8 to the Prime Minister, had suggested that the latter might invite General de Gaulle to London. Mr. Eden thought that there was much to be said for such an invitation if it were given near to D-day—otherwise there would be trouble about preventing the General from returning to Algiers—and if we could first reach an agreement with the Americans on the terms of the instructions to General Eisenhower.

The Prime Minister, after discussing the suggestion with Mr. Eden, agreed to consult the President about it. The Prime Minister also

(a) PMM 541/4 (Z3184/2870/17). (b) Z3705/3422/17; T1051/4, Churchill Papers/345.

agreed to allow General Koenig to send a message in French cypher to General de Gaulle. This message was sent on May 13. General (a) Koenig explained that he had refused a suggestion that he show his messages to British censors. He and M. Viénot might, however, be asked whether they would agree to an arrangement whereby he (General Koenig) would use his own cypher provided that he gave his word to treat only with matters concerning civil affairs. General Koenig asked whether the Committee would accept this proposal, and whether in the meantime they would allow him to continue discussions with S.H.A.E.F. on minor questions.

On May 12 the Prime Minister telegraphed to the President that (b) we thought it essential to reach some kind of understanding with the French National Committee. Owing to the restrictions on cypher communication and movements in or out of the United Kingdom, we could not allow any French representatives who had come or might come to take part in the Eisenhower—Koenig conversations to leave again before D-day. General de Gaulle and the French Committee had refused to accept these conditions on the ground that they made reasonable discussions impossible.

We should thus soon be faced with a public complaint that no kind of arrangement had been made with the French National Committee for the employment of French forces outside or inside France. We could dispense with French aid from outside because the French division would not reach the scene of operations until D-day+90. On the other hand General Eisenhower attached great importance to the action of the French Resistance groups on and after D-day, and undoubtedly we must take care that our troops did not suffer heavier losses owing to the fact that no agreement had been made for the employment of the Resistance groups. The French Committee estimated the strength of the Resistance army as 175,000 men. They intended to incorporate them officially in the French army under the name of the French Forces of the Interior.

The Prime Minister therefore proposed to invite General de Gaulle and one or two of his Committee to come to England on May 18 for secret discussions. He suggested that the President should be represented by General Eisenhower or should send over a special representative, and that the discussions should cover outstanding questions of military and political collaboration.

The President replied on May 13 that he had no objection to an (c) invitation to General de Gaulle to discuss 'your association in military or political matters', though the Prime Minister should consider keeping the General in the United Kingdom until after D-day. General Eisenhower already had full authority to discuss

(a) Z3477/3422/17. (b) T1701/4, No. 674 (Churchill Papers/345; Z3455/3422/17).
 (c) T1072/4, No. 538 (Churchill Papers/345; Z3455/3422/17).

with the Committee all matters on a military level. The President did not wish him to become involved with the Committee on a political level; he was also unable to recognise any Government of France until the French people had had an opportunity for a free choice of government.

(a) The Prime Minister discussed the President's telegram with General Bedell Smith on the evening of May 13. As a result he wrote a minute to Mr. Eden on the following day that he thought it better not to invite General de Gaulle to England before D-day. He would then send a cordial invitation to him to come and arrange with the Americans and ourselves matters affecting any co-operation he could give and the civil administration of any territory which might fall into our hands. General de Gaulle would thus be able to make an agreement long before we were masters of a considerable area in France. Military questions of an urgent importance could probably be settled directly in advance through General Koenig. Meanwhile we should await General de Gaulle's answer to the telegram which General Koenig had been permitted to send to General de Gaulle.

The Prime Minister was sure that General de Gaulle would refuse to come on the basis that he could not leave again until after D-day or correspond except through British or American cyphers. If he came, we could hardly prevent him from corresponding with his Government which, after all, ruled the French Empire.

Mr. Eden thought that there were two serious disadvantages in this plan. General de Gaulle would be greatly offended if he were not told in advance of the date of D-day. We should also lose the effective and valuable help of General de Gaulle's voice on the B.B.C. The Foreign Office thought that it would be useful to invite the General at least two days before D-day. We should ask him to broadcast on D-day and he would probably wish to do so. Meanwhile it was important that the discussions between General Eisenhower and General Koenig on civil affairs should be resumed, and that they should take place on the text of a draft agreement.

The Prime Minister discussed the question with Mr. Eden on the evening of May 15, and on the following day drew up a minute suggesting that there was general agreement that we should postpone a decision until we knew whether General de Gaulle had sent a favourable answer to the message which he had received from General Koenig. If the answer were reasonable and friendly, General Koenig might be able to settle the matters about which General Eisenhower and the Chiefs of Staff were anxious. If General de Gaulle's answer carried us no further, the Prime Minister proposed

(a) Z3456/3422/17.

sending the invitation on D-day. General de Gaulle would then have no restrictions on his communications; he could also return to Algiers whenever he chose. We could reach an agreement on civil administration within a week, and before there was any territory to be handed over to the civil power. Meanwhile, if the answer to General Koenig were not unfavourable, we could allow General Koenig to send a certain number of messages in French cypher under his personal guarantee. The Prime Minister thought that the President would agree to this plan.

The Foreign Office regarded the plan as satisfactory; they also suggested that we ought to do something more to retain French confidence and prevent General de Gaulle from any outburst. The French Consultative Assembly had passed a unanimous resolution that the Committee should take the title of Provisional Government of the French Republic. The Assembly was an advisory body, and had no legislative authority, but the Committee might give effect to this resolution by promulgating an ordinance.¹ In such case the Foreign Office thought that we might ourselves recognise the change of title. We had already dealt with the Committee not only as the Provisional Government of all overseas French territories, but also, in matters concerning the future of France, as the *de facto* French authority which would assume power in France. There was thus no real difference between recognising the Committee as the body qualified to ensure the conduct of the French effort in the war and recognising it as a Provisional Government. We might indeed find it an advantage to accept from the French now their own description of themselves as a 'provisional' authority.

Mr. Eden put this suggestion to the Prime Minister in a minute of May 16. On the following day, however, M. Viénot communicated (a) a reply from General de Gaulle to the message transmitted by General Koenig. General de Gaulle said that the French Committee thought the proposed negotiations could not be usefully pursued, except in regard to the French forces placed at General Eisenhower's disposal, as long as the Committee was unable to communicate in French code with its diplomatic and military representatives in London. The Committee realised the need for secrecy on military measures and would guarantee that no indication with regard to operational preparations would be given in telegrams from General Koenig in London. General Koenig had already sent to S.H.A.E.F. a communication on similar lines to that of M. Viénot. The Prime Minister considered that General de Gaulle's reply should be discussed with General Bedell Smith and the British Chiefs of Staff. On

¹ The Committee took the title on June 2, and informed the Foreign Office of their action on June 9. See below, p. 60.

(a) Z3477/3422/17.

May 17—the day before the meeting—the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden talked over the position with General Bedell Smith. The General said that the breakdown of the negotiations with the French would be inconvenient, but that it was not of vital importance. The Prime Minister thought that the President's reaction to the proposed adoption of the title 'Provisional Government' would be unfavourable. The Committee had not yet officially endorsed the recommendation of the Assembly, but there was no doubt from General de Gaulle's telegram to General Koenig that he was in favour of it.

The Prime Minister thought this change of title would alter the basis upon which the British and United States Governments had recognised the Committee, and that we should await the President's views before making any proposal about it to him. At the meeting with the Chiefs of Staff on May 18 the Prime Minister put forward his plan for inviting General de Gaulle on D-day. General Bedell Smith repeated his view that the Committee's change of title would cause difficulties, particularly owing to the President's instructions that General Eisenhower was to have no dealings with any French authority claiming to represent the Provisional Government of France.

Mr. Eden agreed that we must act with the Americans in our relations with the French authorities, and that General de Gaulle should not be invited to England before D-day. On the other hand he said that the recognition of the Committee as the Provisional Government of France would cause us no loss and would certainly ease our relations with the French. The Prime Minister, however, thought that recognition might bring a demand from the French for full information about our operational plans involving French forces. The Prime Minister said that the matter ought to be discussed in the War Cabinet.

The Chiefs of Staff were strongly against inviting General de Gaulle before D-day, or giving the French any operational information, since we did not know the extent to which the underground organisations in France were penetrated by the Germans. They agreed, however, that M. Viénot and General Koenig might send a limited number of code telegrams to Algiers, on condition that they gave us their word of honour not to send information regarding forthcoming operations, and that they told us the gist of their messages before sending them. The Prime Minister also thought that the situation might be eased if General Wilson were to take General de Gaulle at once into his full confidence regarding operations in Italy

- (a) The War Cabinet accepted these recommendations on May 19. Mr. Eden also explained that until we received an official communication from the French Committee regarding their change of title we need take no action in the matter. After the Cabinet meeting

(a) WM(44)66; Z3457/3422/17.

the Prime Minister telegraphed to the President the proposals to (a) invite General de Gaulle on D-day, and to allow, under certain conditions, M. Viénot and General Koenig to send a few messages to Algiers. He added that we need take no action for the present regarding the Committee's change of title.

The President replied on May 20 that he agreed with the first two (b) proposals. He said that he had no official information regarding 'the self-constituted Provisional Government of France alleged in press reports to have been announced in Algiers'. The President could not go back on his 'oft-repeated statement that the Committee and de Gaulle have aimed to be recognised as the provisional Government of France without any expression or choice by the people themselves' and that he could not recognise it.

On May 21 the Prime Minister sent a message to General de (c) Gaulle that he was not yet able to arrange for the French to have free communication outwards from Great Britain, but that he had arranged with General Eisenhower for the full equipment of the French Leclerc division. Before the arrival of this division he intended to invite General de Gaulle and M. Massigli (and any others whom the General cared to bring with him) to England. President Roosevelt had expressed himself in favour of such an invitation; the object of it would be to settle the remaining questions about the administration of France behind the advancing Anglo-American armies. Mr. Duff Cooper, before delivering the message, asked whether he could give a date, but he was instructed to deliver the (d) message at once, and to reply, if asked about a date, that for reasons probably of an operational kind no date had been mentioned to him.

Mr. Duff Cooper gave the message to General de Gaulle on May (e) 23. He reported that General de Gaulle would be glad to come to London at whatever date the Prime Minister might think desirable. The Prime Minister replied on May 26 with a message that he (f) would be glad to welcome General de Gaulle as the guest of His Majesty's Government.¹ We would like him to understand that he

¹ In a speech in the House of Commons on May 24 Mr. Churchill made a reference to the French National Committee. He said that the forces over which the Committee presided gave it the fourth place in the grand alliance. The reason why the United States and Great Britain had not been able to recognise it yet as the Government or even the Provisional Government of France was that we were not sure that it represented the French nation 'in the same way as the Governments of Britain, the United States and Soviet Russia represent the whole body of their people'. In any case we should have no dealings with the Vichy Government or anyone tainted by association with it. Mr. Churchill added that the Committee would exercise leadership in the matter of law and order in the liberated area of France, under supervision, 'while the military exigencies last', of General Eisenhower. On May 25 Mr. Eden told the House of Commons that the Allied armies would deal with the Committee as 'the French authority which will exercise leadership in France as the liberation progresses'. *Parl. Deb., 5th Ser. H. of C., vol. 400, cols. 779-80.*

(a) T1095/4, No. 678 (Churchill Papers/182; Z3457/3422/177). (b) T1100/4, No. 542 (Churchill Papers/182; Z3458/3422/177). (c) Z3459/3422/17; T1107/4, Churchill Papers/182. (d) Z3459/3422/17. (e) Z3461/3422/17. (f) Z3481/3422/17.

would have complete freedom to communicate with Algiers and to return at his own choice. The time of his coming would have to be chosen in relation to military events, and he would therefore let him know later about a date.

- (a) The Prime Minister also telegraphed to President Roosevelt on May 26 that there was a very strong feeling in Great Britain about the French, and in favour of General de Gaulle about whose faults and follies we could say nothing in public. General de Gaulle himself had lately shown some signs of wishing to work with us and we could hardly cut the French out of the liberation of France. On the
- (b) following day the Prime Minister sent another message to the President asking him 'earnestly' to send over someone of the rank of Mr. Stettinius to express his point of view. The Prime Minister repeated that there was 'strong sentiment in England in favour of France', and that no one would understand the French 'being cold-shouldered'.

Once more, however, General de Gaulle seemed to be damaging his own cause. A report reached London on May 27 that he would refuse to go to England unless an American capable of speaking officially for the United States were present to discuss the plans of the

- (c) United Nations for France. The Prime Minister commented in a telegram to Mr. Duff Cooper that he had already telegraphed to the President asking that he should send a representative to take part in the talks: 'This is just the sort of thing he [General de Gaulle] always does to injure France at critical moments.'
- (d) Mr. Duff Cooper replied on May 29 that—as he had reported—General de Gaulle had said to him that he hoped there would be some one in London who could speak with authority for the United States Government. Mr. Duff Cooper had answered that he could not ask for more than General Eisenhower and the United States Ambassador. M. Massigli had later told Mr. Duff Cooper of General de Gaulle's anxiety that any agreement reached with the British Government might have to be delayed indefinitely owing to a reference to Washington. General de Gaulle had now accepted the invitation without any conditions, and ought not to be blamed for the indiscretions of American journalists.
- (e) On May 31 Mr. Duff Cooper reported that General de Gaulle had told him that he had been somewhat surprised to receive a visit from Admiral Fénard¹ who claimed to be the bearer of a personal message from the President. This message was to the effect that the

¹ Admiral Fénard was the naval representative at Washington of the French Committee. He had joined General Giraud soon after the landings in North Africa.

(a) T1128/4, No. 682 (Churchill Papers/345; Z3479/3422/17). (b) T1140/4, No. 684 (Churchill Papers/345; Z3483/3422/17). (c) Z3482/3422/17; T1137/4, Churchill Papers/345. (d) T1156/4 (Z3705/3422/17; Churchill Papers/345). (e) Z3891/1/69.

President knew that General de Gaulle thought that he (the President) disliked him, but that the opposite was the case, and that the President would be pleased to receive him at Washington whenever he cared to come.¹ General de Gaulle said to Mr. Duff Cooper that he could not understand why this message had been sent to him.

Late in the evening of May 31 the Prime Minister instructed Mr. (a) Duff Cooper to tell General de Gaulle that he would be glad to see him and his friends as soon as it would be convenient for them to come. He offered to send his private aeroplane to bring the party to England. Mr. Duff Cooper replied on June 1 that he would like to be able to tell General de Gaulle that once he was in London it would be much more difficult for the Americans to refuse to take part in the conversations, but that if they still held to their refusal, it would be open to him to return to Algiers.

The Prime Minister replied that Mr. Duff Cooper should not have delayed delivering the invitation. He should now deliver it without the slightest delay in the following terms: 'Come please now with your colleagues at the earliest possible moment and in the deepest secrecy. I give you my personal assurance that it is in the interests of France.' The Prime Minister told Mr. Duff Cooper that he could give no assurances about the United States, but that such matters could be discussed to better advantage in London.

Mr. Duff Cooper delivered the message to General de Gaulle on (b) the morning of June 2. General de Gaulle said that the message obviously meant that the Americans would take no part in the conversations and that he was reinforced in this opinion by the curious mission of Admiral Fénard. After an hour's argument General de Gaulle agreed to come to England simply as a soldier to visit French troops about to take part in the battle and to speak to the French people from England;² he said that it would be useless to bring members of his Government unless they were to negotiate with the Americans as well as with the British. He promised a final reply on the morning of June 3.

¹ President Roosevelt sent a message to Mr. Churchill on May 31 that Admiral Fénard, before returning to Algiers, had asked him (Mr. Roosevelt) whether he had any message for General de Gaulle. The President said that he had been hoping for a message from the General asking whether he (Mr. Roosevelt) would see him if he came to the United States. He told Admiral Fénard to say that, if he received such a message, his answer would be 'an immediate and cordial affirmative'. As the head of the Government and of the State, the President could not well invite General de Gaulle who was only the head of a Committee. In his message to Mr. Churchill the President repeated that he could not send anyone to represent him in the talks with General de Gaulle. He suggested that after Mr. Churchill had talked with General de Gaulle, the latter should ask whether the President would see him if he came directly from London. *F.R.U.S.*, 1944, III, 693-4.

² Radio Algiers did not reach northern France.

(a) T1165/4 (Z3705/3422/17; Churchill Papers/345). (b) Z3891/1/69.

- (a) The National Committee sat for five hours in the evening of June 2. General de Gaulle put to them the question of his visit to London without disclosing that it would take place at once, and therefore without referring to the Prime Minister's personal appeal. The issue under discussion was whether he should go without receiving a guarantee of American participation in the conversations. Mr. Duff Cooper had another hour's discussion with General de Gaulle after the meeting. General de Gaulle asked once more for an absolute guarantee that he would have complete freedom of communication in cypher and complete freedom to return. Mr. Duff Cooper said that he had already told General de Gaulle that he could be assured on both these matters. He was prepared to repeat these assurances. General de Gaulle promised his final reply by 10 a.m. on June 3. Mr. Duff Cooper thought that the reply would be favourable. The reply was favourable, and the General left Algiers for London, without his colleagues, at 2.30 p.m. on June 3.

(a) Z3705/3422/17.

CHAPTER XXXVII

Civil administration in France: the Prime Minister's visit to Paris: Franco-Soviet Pact: Anglo-French relations, January-August 1945

(i)

General de Gaulle's visit to England, June 4-16, 1944.

ALTHOUGH General de Gaulle had agreed on June 3, 1944, after an urgent personal appeal from the Prime Minister, to come to London, his mood on arrival on the night of June 3-4 was extremely difficult. The British and American forces were about to undertake a most hazardous and costly operation which, if successful, would result in the liberation of France. General de Gaulle seemed curiously unable to realise the strength of his position. If the Allied operation succeeded, the French Committee of National Liberation would certainly obtain control of the civil administration of France, with all the political consequences which such control would bring with it. The American President and the British Prime Minister were reluctant to give General de Gaulle this administrative and, ultimately, political predominance, but they had no alternative to him. General de Gaulle—having waited with remarkable tenacity and courage for nearly four years—had now to wait only a few days. Nevertheless he kept rigorously to his demand for a written agreement with an American signature, and, in so doing, gave the impression that he was haggling over unimportant formulae and matters of prestige, and actually hampering the efforts of two great nations to give back to France the liberties which she had thrown away and could not recover for herself.

The Prime Minister and Mr. Eden saw General de Gaulle on (a) June 4. Mr. Churchill explained that he had wished to see the General in order to tell him—as he had been unable to do by telegraph—of the forthcoming operation. The Prime Minister felt that it would have been a bad thing if an operation designed to liberate France had been undertaken by British and American forces without the French being informed of it. The Prime Minister

(a) WP(44)297; Z4379/3636/17.

then said that he had intended to invite the General a little before D-day. Owing to the weather we now had to postpone the operation at least for twenty-four hours and possibly for three days. The operation was to be preceded by an airborne landing of three divisions. On the present weather forecast this airborne landing would not immediately be possible. If we had to make a three days postponement, our minesweepers might have to work in full daylight because the obstacles on the coast could be dealt with only at the lowest tides. If the weather were really bad, we might have to wait ten or twelve days. The Prime Minister said that the bombing of the French railways (which, to our regret, had caused such loss of life) had been necessary in order to limit the number of enemy divisions which could be brought against us while we were building up our strength. General de Gaulle had asked to have an absolutely free right to telegraph to Algiers in his own cypher. The Prime Minister hoped that he was quite sure that the cyphers were safe. As he had recognised General de Gaulle as the head of a great Empire, he must allow him freedom of communication. The Prime Minister, however, wanted an assurance that the General would not give any information about the date and place of the operation. He had taken upon himself the responsibility of entrusting General de Gaulle with our secret.

General de Gaulle thanked the Prime Minister. He said that he had not known about the date, but that he ought to tell the Prime Minister that people in Algiers who listened to the messages in French transmitted by the B.B.C. had inferred from the recent increase in such messages that the operation was about to take place. The Prime Minister said that such messages seemed to him unwise. After the expedition had sailed, we proposed that a series of declarations should be issued by General Eisenhower and the rulers of such countries, e.g. the King of Norway and the Queen of the Netherlands, as the enemy might expect us to be about to invade. The Prime Minister hoped that General de Gaulle would be willing to send such a message to France. He would now have one or two days in which to prepare it. The message need not be long, but should be encouraging, and designed to create uncertainty on the enemy side.

General de Gaulle said he would be glad to do this for two reasons. He thought the operation very important and well-prepared. He was also glad to know that the reason why the Prime Minister had invited him to England was to inform him of the operation. He assumed that after the battle had begun he would be free to return to Algiers.

Mr. Eden said that all our attention had been occupied by the preparations, but that after the battle had opened—or during the period of delay—we thought that it would be useful to discuss

certain political questions. General de Gaulle evaded an answer to this proposal. He thanked the Prime Minister again for inviting him to England and promised complete secrecy.

The Prime Minister said that he had been in correspondence for some time with the President on political matters. The President had begun with the idea that General de Gaulle should pay a visit to the United States, though he did not want to invite him formally. Recently he had seemed less desirous of receiving a visit, partly owing to the treatment of General Giraud. The President had made an arrangement with General Giraud for arming the French Forces, and now General Giraud had gone.

General de Gaulle said that for the moment it was better that he should be in England. The Prime Minister agreed as far as the beginning of the battle was concerned; he thought, however, that we could discuss the administration of liberated France. He pointed out that at first the area liberated might be small, and contain only a few French people who would be under heavy fire. The President had said that General Marshall would be able to speak with General de Gaulle on all military affairs but he had twice refused to agree to conversations between representatives of the three countries on political matters. The Prime Minister, on the other hand, was free to talk *à deux*, but he felt sure that if General de Gaulle were to say that he would like to visit the President, he would be made most welcome. We would be glad to forward a message to the President, and would suggest that, after the battle had begun, General de Gaulle should tell his representative in Washington to inform the President that he desired to come. The President, however, had been unwilling to send a representative to the present conversations. Mr. Eden added that, if General de Gaulle would say that he would go to the United States we might hold preliminary conversations in London at which Mr. Winant could be present. The Prime Minister assured General de Gaulle that there was nothing humiliating in the procedure suggested by the President. He had himself three or four times in the past told the President that he would like to visit him, and the President had declined.

General de Gaulle said that he had sent a message to the President through Admiral Fénard that he would like to visit him. He asked to be kept informed of developments since, as he understood it, the reason for his presence in England was the battle. The Prime Minister said that, as far as the public were concerned, he was thought to be in England in order to discuss the problem of administration. This camouflage was necessary, and apart from it, the Prime Minister had thought that it would be painful for the General to have no knowledge of the operation until it had become public. General Eisenhower would probably go into technical details with

General de Gaulle and his officers. The Prime Minister again spoke of the need for absolute secrecy. He and Mr. Eden then raised once more the question of political conversations.

General de Gaulle said that he must be frank on the matter. He was quite content about the battle; he felt that it showed that the United States, Great Britain and France were together. He had difficulties on the practical question of the administration of French territory. He thought that we should have concluded an agreement on the matter long ago, and indeed in the previous September.

The Prime Minister again strongly advised General de Gaulle to go to see the President. The United States and Great Britain were two great nations willing to risk the loss of scores of thousands of their men in an operation designed to liberate France. It was General de Gaulle's duty to do everything to bind these nations to France; he (the Prime Minister) would be very sorry for France if General de Gaulle were to act otherwise. He must say bluntly that if, after every effort had been made, the President were on the one side and the French National Committee on the other side, he (Mr. Churchill) would almost certainly support the President, and that anyhow no quarrel would arise between Great Britain and the United States over France. The view of the British Government on the civil affairs agreement was that, if General de Gaulle wanted us to ask the President to agree 'to give him the title deeds of France', the answer was 'no'. If he wanted us to ask the President to agree that the Committee was the principal factor with whom we should deal in France, the answer was 'yes'.

General de Gaulle replied that he fully understood that in case of disagreement between the United States and France, Great Britain would side with the former. The Prime Minister said that he had stated his own personal view, but that he had little doubt that the House of Commons would support him.

- (a) The Prime Minister and Mr. Eden had a further conversation at luncheon with General de Gaulle. The Prime Minister again suggested that, after the landings in France, General de Gaulle might go to the United States for discussions with the President. The alternative was for him to return to Algiers, and have no discussions with either of the two Powers who were losing their men in order to liberate France, and without whose help France could not be liberated. If General de Gaulle chose to go first to the United States, a visit could easily be arranged. The Prime Minister had wanted General de Gaulle to be informed about the battle, so that there should be no risk of the reproach that he had not been treated as an ally, but he would strongly advise him to go to the United States,

(a) Z3894/12/17.

and if, in the meantime, we could hold discussions in London, so much the better. We might discuss, for example, the question of currency notes. The President was capable of being persuaded; he had not been hostile to General de Gaulle at Casablanca, and had told the Prime Minister that he thought the General 'a mystic'. France would need the President's friendship, and it was the General's duty to gain it.

Mr. Eden said that Great Britain was also concerned in the matter. We had made a definite offer to begin discussions, and would regret General de Gaulle's refusal of our offer. Mr. Bevin, who was present at the luncheon, said that the Labour Party would resent his refusal. General de Gaulle protested that he had tried more than once to initiate discussions, and had made proposals as long ago as last September, but had received no reply. The battle was about to begin, and he would speak on the wireless. On the other hand, the President had never wanted to see him about the question of administration, and yet he was now told suddenly that the battle was imminent, that we must have conversations at once, that he must go to see the President, and so on.

The Prime Minister said that the battle was being launched by British and American troops, and that the French were not yet in it. He had thought that by his invitation to the General to come to England he might be rendering a service to the Committee which, thanks to British and American efforts, had been set up in North Africa. He wanted to help the French, not to ask for French help. The French would not indeed be in a position to help for many months. When we were in control of some of the territory of France, we could agree upon the question of administration. We were ready to discuss it now if General de Gaulle would do so. The President had replied, in effect, by his directive, to the French proposals of September 1943. The Prime Minister would ask if he might show General de Gaulle the directive. It was a severe document; we did not agree with it, and had not wished to pass it on to the French.

General de Gaulle said that the President could have sent it to him through his representative in Algiers. The Prime Minister then referred to Mr. Hull's speech, which was more favourable to General de Gaulle than the directive, but the President wished the directive to remain unchanged. The Prime Minister had sent at least four telegrams to the President to try to get him to alter it, but the replies did not suggest that the President would change his view. Once again the Prime Minister said that, if he were General de Gaulle, he would chose the way of understanding with the President. (General de Gaulle here interposed that the Prime Minister had always given him this advice.) The Prime Minister repeated that it was for General de Gaulle to use his personality, in the service of France, to solve

these difficulties with the President. The Prime Minister himself had always believed in the 'idée de Gaulle', and had wanted the General to come in with the armies of liberation. 'It would be sad indeed if he were to be left out of it.'

- (a) The Prime Minister and Mr. Eden then took General de Gaulle to see General Eisenhower. General Eisenhower informed General de Gaulle of the military plans. General de Gaulle agreed that the Resistance groups in France should take their instructions from General Eisenhower through General Koenig. He was told that General Eisenhower would broadcast early on D-Day, and that we hoped that General de Gaulle would broadcast immediately after him. Broadcasts on behalf of the other Allies would follow.

General de Gaulle agreed to prepare a broadcast on the lines suggested by General Eisenhower. He said that he would like to re-draft certain passages in the text of the latter's broadcast since the draft did not mention him or the French National Committee. On

- (b) June 5, however, it was found to be technically too late to make any changes in the text. General de Gaulle was so informed; he said that in the circumstances he would not broadcast after General Eisenhower, but he agreed to broadcast later in the day. He also said on the afternoon of June 5 that he wished the French liaison officers attached to the Allied forces to be withdrawn, since there was no agreement as to their duties.

- (c) The Foreign Office realised that General de Gaulle was in a very suspicious mood, and believed that his invitation to England was a trap prepared with the object of giving the impression to the French people that he and his Committee were in agreement with the British and American Governments with regard to policy. The General's demand for the withdrawal of the liaison officers was, however, an extremely serious matter. Moreover, there was for a time on June 5 a mistaken impression that General de Gaulle was refusing to broadcast. Mr. Eden spoke to M. Viénot at 10.30 p.m. on June 5 on both matters. M. Viénot said that General de Gaulle fully intended to broadcast, but that he was unable to authorise the sending of liaison officers since no agreement had been reached about what they were to do. Mr. Eden pointed out that the question had been fully discussed between representatives of S.H.A.E.F. and General Koenig. In any case, the right course was for General de Gaulle to send the officers under the arrangements already made, however unofficially, with General Koenig, and then to discuss civil affairs with us in order to supplement their instructions.

(a) Z3687/3636/17. (b) Z3634/1/69. (c) Z3764, 3765/3636/17.

M. Viénot undertook to see General de Gaulle. He came back to Mr. Eden at 1 a.m. on June 6. Mr. Eden was then with the Prime Minister. M. Viénot explained to the two British Ministers that General de Gaulle had not refused to broadcast, but that he still wished to withdraw the liaison officers. The Prime Minister then spoke in very strong terms of his entire lack of confidence in General de Gaulle and his conviction that as long as he was at the head of French affairs, French relations with Great Britain and the United States would not be good. The Prime Minister described General de Gaulle as an enemy.

General de Gaulle was finally persuaded by Mr. Duff Cooper on (a) June 6 to discuss the question of liaison officers with General Koenig and to agree that a number of the officers should be sent. He told Mr. Duff Cooper that he wanted to establish good long-term relations with Great Britain, but that he saw no possibility of doing so at the present time unless our discussions included representatives of the United States, since the latter would have the last word in the immediate future of France. Mr. Duff Cooper said that the refusal to send the liaison officers with our troops would be interpreted as a reluctance to assist us in battle. General de Gaulle said that the officers in question were not military officers, and would be of little use for military purposes. They had been trained for administrative duties ever since the French had put their proposals to us in September, 1943, for the civil administration of France. Mr. Duff Cooper pointed out that public opinion would not recognise the difference, and that it would be useful for the Allied troops to have French officers with them even if they acted only as interpreters; General de Gaulle could give them such orders as he wished, and limit their powers until he had reached a satisfactory agreement about civil affairs. After agreeing to allow some of the officers to go with the expedition, General de Gaulle said that he was always making concessions, but that no one ever made them to him.

Mr. Eden, after reading Mr. Duff Cooper's account of this conversation, sent a minute to the Prime Minister on June 6 that we had to face the question of a civil affairs agreement. Mr. Eden reminded the Prime Minister that he had been convinced for months past that we ought to try to get an agreement with the French Committee. General Eisenhower had told General de Gaulle privately that he intended to work with the Committee. The liaison officers who would go with the troops would represent the Committee, and should have

(a) Z3634/1/69. (b) Z3634/1/69.

agreed instructions. There was also the difficult question of currency—a question involving much more than the printing on the notes.¹

Mr. Eden suggested that he should tell M. Viénot that we were prepared to discuss civil affairs matters with the Committee, and to bring by air from Algiers any Frenchmen necessary for the discussions. He also hoped that the Prime Minister would agree to send another message to the President urging him to allow Mr. Winant to sit with the Committee. The conclusions reached on the discussions would be submitted to the Prime Minister and the President. We should thus be doing no more than we had already done with regard to the Belgian Government. Mr. Eden said that, if the President would not himself take any responsibility for the future government of France, he ought not to prevent us from acting according to our judgment. The existing position was unfair to us and dangerous to Anglo-American relations.

- (a) Two days later the Prime Minister sent a message to the President in terms which showed his anger at General de Gaulle's attitude.² He said that General de Gaulle had arrived without the three Commissioners whom we understood to be coming with him. He had come alone in order to show that he would not discuss the civil administration of France with us unless an American representative with full powers were also to be present. The Prime Minister referred to the dispute over the liaison officers, and to General de Gaulle's refusal to broadcast.³ He said that 'every courtesy and personal attention' had been lavished upon General de Gaulle, and that Generals Eisenhower and Bedell Smith had done their utmost to conciliate him, and to explain that in practice events would probably mean that the Committee would be the body with whom the Supreme Commander would deal. We had told the General that if he would send for three or four of his Commissioners, we would begin conversations designed to clarify and smooth the difficulties about the civil administration in France. The Commissioners might differ from General de Gaulle and be disposed to make friendly arrangements with the United States and British

¹ See above, Chapter XXXVI, note to section (iv). One of General de Gaulle's complaints was that the notes printed for the use of the Expedition bore General Eisenhower's name.

² It should be remembered that the Prime Minister was writing at the most critical and anxious time in the later stages of the war, and after a prolonged period of very great strain.

³ The Prime Minister said that General de Gaulle had consented to broadcast only after severe pressure from Mr. Eden. This statement was not accurate. See above, p. 56.

(a) T1215/4, No. 694 (Churchill Papers/177; Z4505/3422/17).

Governments. If General de Gaulle refused to send for the Commissioners, we should tell him that he had better go back to Algiers. If he accepted the plan, the Prime Minister hoped that the President would allow Mr. Winant to join in the conversations. If this procedure failed, we should suggest that General de Gaulle should go to Washington in accordance with the message sent to him through Admiral Fénard.¹

In a conversation with General de Gaulle—apparently on June 7 (a)—Mr. Eden spoke again of our wish to discuss French civil affairs, including the currency question, with the French Committee, and to keep the United States Government in close touch with the discussions and try to get American representatives to take part in them. General de Gaulle repeated his argument that he could not enter into discussions which would give a false impression of agreement. He complained about the difficulties in the way of his efforts to improve relations with us. Mr. Eden said that we wanted to discuss all the problems which General de Gaulle was raising. We were unlikely for some time to occupy any considerable territory in France, and meanwhile we could work together on a plan. General de Gaulle thought that no plan would have any value unless the Americans agreed to it. Mr. Eden asked him to set against his complaints the immense Anglo-American effort to liberate France. General de Gaulle interrupted to say that he realised this effort and felt with us for the losses which our army would suffer. Mr. Eden continued that we were asking General de Gaulle to help us to solve the problem of which he complained and could do nothing more if he refused to co-operate in our plan. General de Gaulle, however, continued to complain about our dependence on American policy. Mr. Eden said that he would send M. Viénot a note summarising our proposals and that future progress would depend upon General de Gaulle's answer.

The note delivered to M. Viénot on June 8 repeated that His (b) Majesty's Government had contemplated the holding of discussions on civil affairs when they invited General de Gaulle and his colleagues to London. These conversations would include the matters raised by the French Committee in their memorandum of September 7, 1943, and also the question of currency. His Majesty's Government understood that General de Gaulle might not feel able to engage in these conversations without the presence of other members of the Committee. His Majesty's Government would therefore

¹ The Prime Minister's concluding words were: 'I think it would be a great pity if you and he did not meet. I do not see why I should have all the luck.'

(a) Z3697, 3895/12/17. (b) Z3697/12/17.

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welcome these members and would put transport at their disposition. They would also inform President Roosevelt, and invite him to send a representative to the conversations or allow Mr. Winant to take part in them. If a reasonable basis of agreement were reached in the discussion, His Majesty's Government would commend it to the United States Government and would be ready to send a representative to Washington to be present at the discussions between the representatives of the French Committee and of the United States Government.

- (a) Mr. Viénot replied on June 9 that General de Gaulle had explained before leaving Algiers that, in the absence of American representation, he did not think negotiations possible. In any case they would be more difficult owing to certain measures taken by General Eisenhower without French consent. e.g. the introduction of an Anglo-American currency into France. In spite, however, of these infringements of French sovereignty, and with the desire to facilitate the conduct of the war against the common enemy, M. Viénot had been instructed to open conversations with His Majesty's Government at once on the basis of the French memorandum of September 7, 1943. Mr. Eden told M. Viénot that he was disappointed with the reply. He asked whether General de Gaulle could not bring some members of the Committee to London in order that he and they might take part in the discussions. M. Viénot promised to speak to General de Gaulle again. The General could not be persuaded, however, to go beyond an acceptance of discussions at the lower level.

- In his note M. Viénot used the term 'Provisional Government' to describe the Committee, and 'President' when referring to General de Gaulle.
- (b) M. Paris communicated to the Foreign Office on June 9 a decree of the French Committee establishing their new title. He said that the change was only one of name, and did not alter the facts of the situation or the course of arrangements for the future administration of France. He did not raise the question of recognition of the new title.
- (c) On June 12 Mr. Eden, in a minute to the Prime Minister, pointed out that all our previous negotiations with Allied Governments on the administration of liberated territory had been conducted on our side by a small group of officials; we had not shown the texts to the Americans until the officials had completed their work. Mr. Eden thought that we might follow the same procedure with the French, i.e. our official committee could work with M. Viénot or his representative, and reach a text without commitment to either side. We could then examine the text and, if we thought it acceptable, recommend it to the Americans. Mr. Eden thought this plan had

(a) Z3713/12/17. (b) Z3724/652/69. (c) Z3792/12/17.

certain advantages, and was a less spectacular process than an invitation to the French Commissioners to come to London.

Mr. Eden also told the War Cabinet on June 12 that he was con- (a)
sidering M. Viénot's proposal, but that talks on an official level were
not likely to improve the position between the French and the
United States. On the following day the War Cabinet sanctioned the
opening of conversations with M. Viénot, though it was now clear
that no American representative would be present. The discussion
in the War Cabinet began with an examination of the special
difficulties arising in connexion with the currency question. The
Prime Minister had telegraphed to the President that General de (b)
Gaulle was prepared to make a proclamation supporting the special
currency notes, but might press for the inclusion of the words
'Provisional Government of France' in the proclamation. The
President replied that he agreed with the Prime Minister's view that (c)
General de Gaulle was trying to exploit the currency issue as a means
of compelling us to give full recognition to the Committee.

In the course of the discussion Mr. Eden said that in his opinion
the President was inclined to judge the French situation in terms of
the United States, where the President was the executive, and to
suppose that General de Gaulle would hold similar a position in
France. Mr. Eden did not think that this view was correct. On the
other hand he felt that it was most important for us to secure the
establishment of an authority in France with which we could do
business. He suggested that we might use General de Gaulle's sug-
gestion for conversations with M. Viénot on an official basis to work
out—without commitment—the text of an agreement, and that, if we
approved of the text thus produced, we could recommend it to the
Americans.

The War Cabinet accepted this suggestion, and agreed that, in
spite of the difficulties caused by General de Gaulle's personality and
attitude since he had come to England, we should try to reach an
agreement with the Committee, but that this arrangement should
not involve recognising them as the Provisional Government of
France. The War Cabinet also thought that Mr. Eden, who was
seeing General de Gaulle at dinner on the evening of June 13, should
again do his utmost to persuade him to send members of his Com-
mittee to England for discussions before he (General de Gaulle)
went to the United States.

General de Gaulle, though unwilling to go very far to meet the (d)
appeal of the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden, had asked that he might

(a) WP(44)321; WM(44)76. 3, C.A.; WM(44)77. 4, C.A.; Z3736, 4054/12/17.
(b) T1241/4, No. 697, Churchill Papers/177. (c) T1269/4, No. 559, Churchill Papers/
177. (d) Z4113/3422/17.

be allowed to visit Normandy before going back to Algiers. This demand produced another irritated comment from the Prime Minister. In a minute to Mr. Eden on June 13 the Prime Minister wrote that, although he could 'adduce many reasons against any compliments being paid to a man who has shown himself so entirely free from any sympathy with us or the Americans or the efforts we are making to liberate his own country', he felt committed by the references to a visit to France which he had made to General de Gaulle 'before his new misbehaviour began'. The Prime Minister thought that General de Gaulle would not be able to hold a public meeting in Bayeux or gather crowds in the streets, though he would doubtless 'like to have a demonstration to show that he is the future President of the French Republic'. The Prime Minister suggested that he should drive slowly through the town, shake hands with a few people, and then return, leaving any subsequent statement to be made here. On the other hand, 'everything in the way of courtesy should be done to him'. The Prime Minister added; 'Remember that there is not a scrap of generosity about this man, who only wishes to pose as the saviour of France in this operation without a single French soldier at his back.' We had brought General de Gaulle to England 'out of pure chivalry towards his unhappy country, to tell them about the battle before it was engaged', whereas the General himself had come to the conclusion that we had asked him here only 'to get him to make a broadcast'.

General de Gaulle's visit to Normandy on June 14 was somewhat marred by a confusion over the arrangements—due, mainly, to the General's own action in bringing with him a much larger party (a) than had been expected. The Foreign Office thought that the British military authorities might have shown more consideration in adapting their arrangements to suit the General, and more imagination in understanding the significance of the visit from the French point of view. General de Gaulle himself was extremely well received by his own countrymen, and regarded the visit as a success.¹

General de Gaulle went back to Algiers on June 16. In thanking (b) Mr. Eden for the hospitality of the British Government he said that he admitted that there had been difficulties in the discussions but that he was glad that he had come. The only outstanding questions were the administration of France and the currency. He hoped that some arrangement would soon be arrived at on the latter question. With regard to the administration, General de Gaulle said that

¹ For an account of the actual transfer of local authority to General de Gaulle's representatives, see R. Aron, *Histoire de la Libération de la France* (Paris, 1959), Pt. I, chs. II and III, and Pt. II, ch. I.

(a) Z4241/3422/17. (b) Z3874/3422/17.

both Mr. Eden and Mr. Hull had expressed the view that the lead must fall to the French Committee. If we could agree on the practical application of this principle, the French authorities would of course give us the utmost assistance in their power. General de Gaulle was not concerned with the question of recognising the new title of 'Provisional Government'.

General de Gaulle also wrote a letter of thanks in the most appreciative terms to the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister's reply was much colder. He regretted that his hopes of assisting the Committee to come to more friendly terms with the United States Government had not been realised. He said that 'ever since 1907, in good times and bad times', he had been a sincere friend of France, as his words and actions had shown, and that it was to him 'an intense pain that barriers had been raised' to this association. 'Here in this visit of yours, which I personally arranged, I had the hope that there was a chance of putting things right. Now I have only the hope that it may not be the last chance.' The Prime Minister then advised General de Gaulle most strongly to carry out his proposed visit to the United States, and told him that he would give every assistance to him in an attempt to 'establish for France those good relations with the United States which are a most valuable part of her inheritance'.

The Prime Minister said to the War Cabinet that he was a little uneasy over the fact that General de Gaulle had described himself during his visit to France as President of the Provisional Government. He thought that President Roosevelt might be annoyed at the assumption of this title. The President, however, had telegraphed on June 14 that he did not object to a visit of General de Gaulle to France, and that he thought we should make full use of any organisation or influence which the General might have without imposing him by force upon the French people or 'giving recognition to his outfit as the Provisional Government of France'. Mr. Eden thought that this message showed a step forward on the part of the President, and that in our discussions with the French we might work out an arrangement which did not bring up the issue of recognition of the Committee as the Provisional Government of France. The Prime Minister replied: 'There is no objection to your trying your best on the humble level to which de Gaulle has reduced the discussions.'

The anxiety in the Foreign Office at this time over the unwillingness (or so it appeared) of the Prime Minister to oppose President Roosevelt's wishes in matters affecting British and European interests can be seen in the comments on a letter received from

(a) Churchill Papers/345; Z4448/3422/17. (b) WM(44)79; Z4156/4034/17.
(c) T1289/4, No. 511 (Churchill Papers/177; Z4240/3422/17).

- (a) Lord Halifax early in June. Lord Halifax wrote on May 30 to Mr. Eden that Mr. Stettinius had come to see him on May 23 in order to give him an account of his discussions in London. Mr. Stettinius admitted that the United States Administration had gone back on the arrangements made in Moscow as regards the matters to be dealt with on the European Advisory Commission.¹ Mr. Stettinius supposed² that the Secretary of State³ attached importance to the Commission as a means of assuring that the Russians would not take unilateral decisions about Eastern European questions and as a continuing hindrance to the division of Europe into different spheres of influence.

Mr. Stettinius did not know the reason for the President's attitude towards the Commission. He thought that it might well be the fear that, since the United States Government could be represented in the Commission only by an *ad hoc* team far away from their own Government and departmental experts, the United Kingdom would take too much of a lead, and would be able to secure the adoption of proposals which the President might not like; the United Kingdom might thereby organise Europe generally on the lines of its own policy, and might appear to the European countries as 'leaders in Europe of the Anglo-Saxon countries'. Mr. Stettinius thought that this was 'something which the President might not wholly relish'. Mr. Stettinius also mentioned that the Combined Chiefs of Staff were hampering the work of the European Advisory Commission by refusing to allow certain papers to come before it on the ground that they dealt with purely military matters.

Lord Halifax thought that Mr. Stettinius's view was of interest in relation to the President's suggestion that he alone should issue a statement on D-day, and that there should be no tripartite statement.

The Foreign Office considered that Lord Halifax's letter should be shown to the Prime Minister. Sir W. Strang commented that he was, in fact, carrying out his instructions in taking the lead firmly in the European Advisory Commission on the question of consultation with our European Allies on the terms of surrender for Germany and the question of the participation of the forces of these Allies in the occupation of Germany. On these two matters Mr. Winant had been giving him steady and loyal support. Sir W.

¹ See Volume V, Note to Chapter LXIV.

² It is uncertain from the text of Lord Halifax's letter ('he said he supposed') whether this assumption was made by Mr. Stettinius or by the President; Lord Halifax probably meant Mr. Stettinius.

³ It is probable, though not clear from Lord Halifax's text, that by 'Secretary of State' Lord Halifax meant Mr. Hull and not Mr. Eden.

(a) U5894/3/70.

Strang thought that the Americans could not take an effective lead in Europe, since Europeans, remembering the events of 1919, and with the Darlan and other French episodes freshly in mind, would not follow an American lead. Lord Halifax's letter provided us with another good reason for not giving way to the President about the allocation of the two zones of occupation in Germany¹ and for opposing the continuation of the Combined Command after the end of hostilities in Europe for any time longer than was necessary on military grounds. We could not have a free foreign policy in Europe as long as there was an American Supreme Commander responsible to the Combined Chiefs of Staff in Washington. It was bad enough to have our French policy stultified now; there might be even greater dangers, affecting our very security, if Washington confused the handling of Germany after the German surrender.

Sir A. Cadogan agreed with Sir W. Strang's view, though he thought that there might be practical difficulties in the way of following Sir W. Strang's advice. Mr. Eden decided to send Lord Halifax's letter, with a short covering minute, to the Prime Minister. The minute—dated June 22—merely stated, without comment, that he (Mr. Eden) was sending the record of a conversation between Lord Halifax and Mr. Stettinius on the subject of the President's attitude towards Europe as a whole and Great Britain in particular. The Prime Minister acknowledged the minute on June 24, but made no comment on it.

(ii)

Final acceptance of an agreement on civil affairs with the French National Committee: General de Gaulle's visit to Washington (June 15–July 24, 1944).

The discussions with M. Viénot opened on June 19. The French (a) Committee had recommended to General de Gaulle that French experts should come to London to take part in these discussions, though they considered that, unless the conversations were tripartite, or that some assurance was obtained in advance that the United States Government would consider favourably any agreement reached in London, it would be useless to send any members of the Committee.

Mr. Eden thought, rightly, that within a short time the facts of (b) the situation would convince the Americans that there was no practical alternative to the policy of dealing solely with the French Committee on administrative questions. As our armies advanced we should want some authority to whom we could hand over the

¹ See Volume V, Note to Chapter LXIV.

(a) Z3736, 3737/12/17. (b) Z3850/12/17.

local administration. The Americans had agreed that we could not work with Vichy. It would also be impossible to hold local elections under the military control of the liberating armies. We should very soon see whether—as Mr. Eden expected—the local population was ready to accept the Committee.

The attitude of the French people in the liberated areas was at once clear from the reception given to General de Gaulle on his short visit to the small area under Allied control in Normandy. Further evidence came in rapidly while the discussions were taking place. The discussions themselves were on a business-like basis and over a draft already drawn up by the Foreign Office with the co-operation of British and American officers of S.H.A.E.F. in anticipation of discussions with General de Gaulle. The British representatives, headed by Sir S. H. MacGeagh, Judge Advocate-General of the Forces, had the experience of previous negotiations for civil agreements with other Allied Governments.

- (a) On June 28 Mr. Eden reported in a memorandum for the War Cabinet that agreement had been reached on the main articles defining the respective powers of the Commander-in-Chief and the French authorities with regard to civil administration. The basis of the arrangement was a division of France into 'forward' and 'interior' zones on the lines of the original French proposals of September 1943. The civil administration was to be French in both zones (except in extreme cases of military necessity); the Commander-in-Chief's wishes would be met in the forward zone, and his forces would be given all facilities required by them in the interior zone. The currency question would be settled—within the framework of a general Mutual Aid agreement—by a provision recognising the French as the issuing authority of the 'supplemental francs' and providing that they would put at the disposal of the Allied forces such currency as the latter required. The general method of procedure would be to draw up four separate documents on civil affairs and jurisdiction, finance, publicity, and property. These documents could be turned into an agreement later by an exchange of notes between Mr. Eden and M. Viénot. We could thus escape any mention of the term 'Provisional Government of France'. Five days later Mr. Eden was able to submit to the War Cabinet a joint memorandum by himself, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the Secretary of State for War to the effect that the discussions were now concluded, and that certain of the French representatives had gone back to Algiers to obtain approval for their work and were hopeful that the Committee would accept the memoranda. Mr. Eden said that we had informed the United States Government of the result

(a) WP(44)354; U5381, 6214/14/74. (b) WM(44)366; WP(44)85; U6187, U6250/14/74.

of the discussions, and were awaiting their views. Mr. Eden asked whether the Prime Minister would think it advisable to send a personal message to Mr. Roosevelt. The Prime Minister, with the agreement of the War Cabinet, thought that the balance of advantage was in favour of using official channels.

The chances of obtaining agreement now seemed more favourable. The course of events brought some modification in President Roosevelt's view, though not in his fundamental distrust of General de Gaulle. At first the President had been disinclined to make any move from the position which he had been holding so stubbornly. He had telegraphed to the Prime Minister on June 19 that General (a) de Gaulle had sent him a polite but vague reply to the invitation which he had sent through Admiral Fénard.

The Prime Minister replied on June 20 that he hoped that General (b) de Gaulle would go to Washington because it would be 'a good thing all round if some sort of arrangement could be fixed'. The arrangement need not involve recognition of the Committee as the Provisional Government of France, but the Prime Minister thought that in practice it would be found that General de Gaulle and the Committee represented most of 'the elements who want to help us. Vichy is a foe, and there is a large middle body who only wish to be left alone and eat good meals from day to day. The energizing factor of de Gaulle must not be forgotten in our treatment of the French problem.'

On June 23 the President answered that he also hoped that a visit (c) by General de Gaulle to Washington would have a corrective effect on what was now a very unsatisfactory situation. The President added that he had heard from the British Embassy that we were planning discussions with the Committee prior to General de Gaulle's visit 'with the thought of being helpful to the Washington conversations'. The President hoped that we should not make any agreements with the Committee before giving him an opportunity to comment on them. He did not want to be faced with a *fait accompli* on the General's arrival in Washington.

The Prime Minister replied on June 24 that the conversations in (d) London with M. Viénot were only on an unofficial basis, since General de Gaulle had been unwilling to send any members of his Committee unless the United States Government were represented in the talks. The purpose of the conversations was to discover an acceptable basis for an agreement; we and the United States Government had agreed that the Committee should take the leadership in

(a) T1321/4, No. 564 (Churchill Papers/177; Z4111/3422/17). (b) T1325/4, No. 707 (Churchill Papers/177; Z4319/1555/17). (c) T1345/4, No. 567 (Churchill Papers/177; Z4377/1555/17). (d) T1372/4, No. 713 (Churchill Papers/177; Z4649/12/17).

the civil administration of France. Our representatives would have no power to conclude an agreement. They would submit their work to Mr. Eden and the Prime Minister, and the President would be consulted before the British Government came to a decision. There would be no mention at the discussions of the question of recognising the Committee as the Provisional Government of France.

- (a) The documents agreed in the discussions with M. Viénot were communicated to the United States Ambassador in London on July 2. Mr. Winant asked on July 3 that, for convenience of cyphering, copies might be sent to Mr. Hull by the British Embassy in Washington. Sir R. I. Campbell was instructed to let Mr. Hull have two sets of the documents as contained in telegrams to Washington in order that one set might be available for the President.

On July 4 Sir R. I. Campbell was instructed to tell Mr. Hull that the discussions with the French had gone very well, and that they recognised from the outset the need for General Eisenhower to have supreme authority whenever required for the successful conduct of his operations. We had had little difficulty in persuading them to discuss a purely practical scheme of arrangements without raising the question of the title of the Committee or any extension of the existing formula of recognition. We considered that the resulting documents formed a good basis for settling a difficult question and thus helping military operations. These arrangements were confined to the practical necessities of the liberation period and did not prejudice the choice by the French people of a representative Provisional Government as soon as circumstances allowed. Mr. Eden hoped that the United States authorities would accept the documents as a basis for discussion on the Combined Chiefs of Staff and Combined Civil Affairs Committees, and that they could then be embodied in working agreements with the French Committee and a directive to General Eisenhower. We intended to conclude the arrangements with the Committee by means of an exchange of notes; we should avoid a wording which might appear to recognise the claim of the Committee to be the Provisional Government.

- The Foreign Office were at first considerably annoyed at the delay in getting an answer from the State Department, and at Mr. Hull's apparent refusal to regard the matter as urgent. No official reply giving the American view was received until the end of General de Gaulle's visit to Washington¹ and the Prime Minister had meanwhile heard no further word from the President. On July 10 the
- (b) Prime Minister sent a message to Mr. Eden that, from reports which we had received, the President did not appear to have discussed French affairs as such with General de Gaulle, but to have

¹ General de Gaulle arrived in the United States on July 6 and left on July 11.

(a) U6187/14/74. (b) U6281/14/74.

limited himself to talk about the progress of the war and the future of Germany.¹

The Prime Minister said that he was now willing to press the President to agree with the reasonable proposals which had been drawn up in the Viénot conversations, with the obvious condition that they should not affect General Eisenhower's overriding authority in the war zones. The Prime Minister repeated his views to the War (a) Cabinet on July 10, and added that, if the United States Government did not agree with our proposals, we might have to consider taking independent action. Mr. Eden was about to telegraph instructions to Sir R. I. Campbell to see Mr. Hull and ask him to use his influence to secure a speedy settlement on the lines we proposed. The President, (b) however, telegraphed on July 10 to the Prime Minister that he was prepared to accept the Committee as the temporary *de facto* authority for civil administration in France provided (a) that General Eisenhower had powers to do everything he might think necessary for military operations, (b) that the French people were given an opportunity to make a free choice of their own Government.² If the British drafts were modified to include references to these two points, the President was willing to take them as a basis of discussion with the French.³ He suggested that the British political and military authorities in Washington should be authorised to work out details at once with the United States officials for 'final clearance' through the Combined Chiefs of Staff; General de Gaulle was leaving behind officials qualified to deal with the matter. The President concluded with the words: 'The [General de Gaulle's] visit has gone off very well.'

The Prime Minister sent a note to Mr. Eden on July 11 that, on (c) the whole, the President's message impressed him favourably, and that he would like to agree with the proposals in it. The Prime Minister said: 'It is very important to act swiftly on this.'⁴ Mr. Eden, after discussing the message by telephone with the Prime Minister, sent him a draft reply to the President that we had already suggested to Mr. Hull the procedure which the President proposed, and were now sending instructions accordingly to Washington. We also

¹ See, however, below, pp. 72-3 and 88. General de Gaulle in his *Memoirs* has stated that the President spoke in general terms of his ideas about the organisation of world security after the war. General de Gaulle thought that these ideas foreshadowed American plans to control the world at the expense of Europe. De Gaulle, *Memoirs*, II, *Unity*, trans. R. Howard (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1959), 241-3.

² The Prime Minister noted 'eventually' on his copy of the President's message.

³ The President also agreed to the issue of currency notes by the French Committee. According to General de Gaulle, the President said that it (the currency question) was not a question into which he had ever gone very deeply.

⁴ The Prime Minister marked his minute to Mr. Eden: 'to be delivered as soon as he wakes.'

(a) WM(44)89. (b) T1427/4, No. 582 (Churchill Papers/177/4; Z4650/12/17); U6343/14/74. (c) PMM 840/4, Churchill Papers/177/4.

agreed that General Eisenhower must have all the authority necessary for his operations. The French themselves had fully recognised the necessity in their discussions with us. We had not found it easy to devise a form of words reconciling General Eisenhower's supremacy with French susceptibilities, but we were satisfied that we had safeguarded the position. We would not object to any improvement in the wording acceptable to the French. We did not think it appropriate to insert into an agreement limited to practical administrative questions a clause about the holding of free elections. In any case the French had made adequate provision, and we could be sure that the democratic-minded civilian members of the Assembly and the French people would see that the elections were held. We assumed that the President would want General Eisenhower to sign an agreement on his behalf after it had been cleared by the Combined Chiefs of Staff. Mr. Eden would sign for us with a representative of the French Committee.

On July 11 the President made a statement at his press conference that the United States Government were prepared to accept the French Committee as the *de facto* authority for the civil administration of France, and that he expected a memorandum on civil affairs to be signed shortly. The memorandum would be on the basis of the texts agreed in London.

- The Prime Minister asked whether Mr. Eden did not now think that some change was necessary in his draft, but Mr. Eden replied that all we need add would be a sentence to the effect that as we were already prepared to accept the London texts and there appeared to be little difference between our views and those of the President, we hoped that the American talks with the French would soon be concluded and that we could get the memoranda settled within a
- (a) very few days. The Prime Minister's telegram was therefore sent on July 12.
 - (b) President Roosevelt replied on July 14 that he felt that the small difference between the British and American drafts of the agreement could be adjusted by the British and American representatives in Washington working with the representatives of the French Committee. It was essential that General Eisenhower should have all the authority necessary for the conduct of his military operations at the smallest cost in life to the American and British soldiers. The President said that he would now be away for several weeks but could always be reached.
 - (c) Meanwhile on July 12 the Foreign Office heard by telephone from the British Embassy in Washington that the State Department thought it desirable to open bilateral conversations at once with the

(a) T1438/4, No. 726 (Churchill Papers/177; Z4651/12/17). (b) T1440/4, No. 583 (Churchill Papers/177; Z4651/12/17). (c) U6281, 6343/14/74.

French on the American amendments to our draft. The Foreign Office had replied by telephone that we did not object to the proposal that they should start by holding conversations alone with the French. Mr. Eden instructed Sir R. I. Campbell that the essential point was to reach quickly a tripartite agreement. If the Americans and French agreed upon a text, we should wish to see it, but we hoped that the former could be persuaded to accept the greater part of the London texts which could then be embodied in a comprehensive agreement to be signed on the American side by General Eisenhower on the military level, and on the British side by Mr. Eden with a political representative of the French Committee.

In spite of a good deal of discussion over detailed points,¹ there was now little doubt that a settlement would be concluded. The course of events in France—as the Foreign Office had foreseen—had made it impossible for the President to maintain his obstinate refusal to recognise that the French Committee had the effective support of the French people. The President was still unwilling, for no good reason, to concede to the Committee the title of Provisional Government; this final concession would obviously have to be made within a short time.

The last stage in the settlement of the administrative question was thus reached without much delay. On August 25 agreements in (a) identical terms with the French were concluded in Washington and London; the Anglo-French agreement was signed by Mr. Eden and M. Massigli,² and the Franco-American agreement by General Eisenhower and General Koenig. A communiqué published at the time of signature explained that the arrangements were essentially temporary and practical in character. Their purpose was to facilitate the direction and co-operation of the assistance which the French authorities and people could render to the Allied forces, the adoption of measures necessary for the successful conduct of operations, and the orderly resumption of full responsibility for the civil administration by the French authorities. The Soviet Government had been consulted regarding the arrangements and had expressed their agreement.

During this time the Foreign Office had little information from the American side of the discussions between the President and

¹ I have not dealt with this discussion.

² M. Viénot had died suddenly on July 20. M. Massigli signed the agreement as Commissioner for Foreign Affairs.

(a) Z5144/255/17.

(a) General de Gaulle on matters other than the question of a civil administration agreement. General de Gaulle, however, had told Sir R. I. Campbell that the President had spoken a good deal about bases, and had said that for security reasons the United States would need some bases on French territory. General de Gaulle had asked the President for what purpose he needed these bases. The obvious answer would be 'against Germany', but in this case the best place for bases would be the Rhine; it would surely be unnecessary to wait in any future aggression until the Germans had reached Dakar (which the President appeared to have mentioned). General de Gaulle said that the President was most insistent on the subject, and that he seemed to be preoccupied mainly with American (as distinct from general) security and with American use of the bases rather than with their use by the United Nations in a general security system.

(b) On his return General de Gaulle talked to Mr. Duff Cooper about his visit. Mr. Duff Cooper reported on the night of July 17–18 that the General spoke with characteristic lack of enthusiasm, but admitted that the atmosphere of his conversations had been satisfactory. He had discussed three main subjects with the President: (i) Franco-American agreements on immediate issues in France. Although he did not expect any important difficulties, he wished that the President had been willing to accept the drafts already concluded in London. (ii) The future of Germany. General de Gaulle said that France should be consulted on this matter, since it affected her more than any other country. He was in favour of a prolonged occupation and of the dismemberment of Germany. (iii) Defence bases. The President regarded himself as responsible not only for the future security of the United States, but also as a trustee for the security of South America. He talked of the 'authority' which the United States would have to exercise in Dakar, India, the Dutch East Indies, Singapore and elsewhere. General de Gaulle thought that this idea had assumed a somewhat exaggerated importance in the President's mind. He had told the President that at least for the moment there were only two nations—Germany and Japan—whose aggression there might be reason to fear, and that the best bases were those nearest the aggressor.

(c) The Prime Minister commented on this telegram to Mr. Eden that he proposed to send personally to the President General de Gaulle's account of the conversation about bases. The President had never used words of this kind to the Prime Minister about

(a) Z4435/1555/17. (b) Z4620, 4942/1/69. (c) Z4942/1/69.

Singapore and India, and it would do no harm 'to give him a prod and an opportunity of denying them'. With regard to the Dutch, the President was well disposed towards Queen Wilhelmina, but would want some economic advantages in the Netherlands East Indies. As far as Great Britain was concerned, the Prime Minister said 'my irrevocable principle is that no government of which I am the Head will yield one square inch of British territory or British rights in any quarter of the globe except for greater advantage or for moral scruples'. The Prime Minister thought that it would be a good thing to let the President know 'the kind of way de Gaulle interprets friendliness. I have now had four years' experience of him, and it is always the same.'

Mr. Eden replied to the Prime Minister on July 23 that he too would like to know whether the President would confirm the language attributed to him by General de Gaulle about Singapore and India. On the other hand Mr. Eden doubted whether it would be wise to tell the President of statements made by General de Gaulle confidentially to Mr. Duff Cooper. General de Gaulle had in fact behaved towards us as an Ally should behave in reporting his talks with the President. He had given a fairly full account of the talks to Sir R. I. Campbell and Mr. Duff Cooper, whereas the President had merely told the Prime Minister that 'the visit had gone off very well'.

We were nearer to complete agreement with the Americans over our policy towards France than we had been for some years. Much hard work had been necessary to bring about this state of affairs, and it would be a pity to spoil the effect by giving the President the impression that General de Gaulle was abusing his friendliness. The Prime Minister replied on August 2: 'As you will.'

(iii)

Foreign Office proposals for the formal recognition of the French National Committee as the Provisional Government of France: unwillingness of the President to grant recognition: the Prime Minister's support of the President's attitude: change in United States policy: recognition of the Committee by Great Britain and the United States as the Provisional Government of France (June 26–October 23, 1944).

Although, owing mainly to the President's attitude and, to a lesser extent, the attitude of the Prime Minister, the civil affairs agreement had not included a recognition of the claim of the French Committee to the title of Provisional Government, Mr. Eden had continued during the negotiations to keep the question of recognition in view.

- (a) Mr. Eden had submitted a note to the Prime Minister on June 26 summing up the arguments from a British point of view. The issue was not immediate; it would be better, before raising it in Washington and Moscow, to wait until after we had put to the United States Government the proposals which were being worked out with M. Viénot.

The arguments in favour of recognition were as follows: (i) the Committee controlled forces and territories which gave them fourth place in the Grand Alliance; (ii) our estimate of General de Gaulle's position in France had been confirmed in Normandy. If he were accepted elsewhere, it would be unwise of us to withhold recognition. The French overseas Empire had already declared for the Committee. (iii) The practical effect of recognition now would be of considerable assistance to our war effort. Our landings had already brought about desertions from the Vichy forces. These desertions would increase in all the Vichy public services and there would be less chance of civil war if we recognised the Committee as a government. (iv) The effect on our own future relations with France would be good. We wanted a strong France, and to do all we could to restore French self-respect and unity. (v) We should not be imposing General de Gaulle and his colleagues on France because their own arrangements provided for the holding of elections and the establishment of a representative Assembly three months after the liberation of two-thirds of France (including Paris). It could not be said, therefore, that we were going back on our policy of allowing the French to choose their own Government.

- (b) The Prime Minister made no comment on this note. On July 8 Mr. Eden raised the matter again with him. He pointed out that since his note of June 26 General de Gaulle had gone to the United States and there were signs that the United States Government wanted to be more accommodating towards the Committee and to put its relations with it on a more satisfactory basis. Mr. Eden thought that we ought to recognise the Committee before recognition was forced upon us by events; he asked whether the Prime Minister would agree to make a proposal to this effect to the United States and Soviet Governments, and to suggest July 14 as an appropriate date.

- (c) The Prime Minister replied on July 10 that it would be most unwise to make up our minds until we knew the result of 'the President's honeymoon with de Gaulle'. We should certainly have to go as far as the United States, and might have to press them to go further. If the President made a *volte face* and came to terms with General de Gaulle, we should have a very good case to present to

(a) Z4321/4034/17. (b) Z4593/4034/17. (c) PMM 816/4, Churchill Papers/182/2.

Parliament showing that it would have been a mistake on our part to have had a premature debate on the subject.

Mr. Eden decided to make another attempt to convince the Prime Minister. On July 18 he sent him a minute in which he began by referring to the President's statement at his press conference on July 11. Mr. Eden pointed out that in referring to this statement at Ottawa General de Gaulle was reported to have said that the French Government was a fact and that the formula of recognition was unimportant. The main thing was that there was now a government; Frenchmen well understood that other States might ask themselves certain questions, and wait a while before answering them. Mr. Eden said that, legally, the difference between what the President had said and recognition of the Committee as the *de facto* administration, or even Government, of the areas in which they were in a position to exercise authority was extremely small, indeed almost non-existent. Mr. Eden had informed the House of Commons on July 12 that the recent Anglo-French discussions were conducted on the basis that the French Committee would exercise governmental authority in France as the liberation of the country proceeded. He thought it unwise for us to continue the present anomalous situation in which we treated the Committee as the governmental power in France, but refused to call them a Provisional Government.

Mr. Eden did not propose that we should modify in any way the terms of our recognition of the French Committee on August 26, 1943. We had then secured all the safeguards which we had thought necessary, including the right of the French people themselves to settle their own constitution and to establish their own Government after they had had an opportunity to express themselves freely. The Americans had also covered this point, in different language, in their own recognition of the Committee.

Mr. Eden therefore proposed that in future we should use the term 'Provisional Government of the French Republic'. We need only make a brief communication to the French referring to the terms of our recognition of the Committee, and stating that we had taken note of the Committee's ordinance of June 2, 1944, and had decided to employ in future the new designation which the Committee had adopted. If the Prime Minister agreed, Mr. Eden would consult the Dominion Governments, and then inform the United States and Soviet Governments of our intention. They could take similar action if they wished to do so.

Mr. Mackenzie King also telegraphed about General de Gaulle's short and successful visit to Ottawa after leaving Washington. He confirmed that General de Gaulle had made little of the question of recognition. Mr. Mackenzie King, however, thought that our

acceptance of the new designation might have a useful psychological effect, and that, unless there were considerations unknown to him, the question at issue seemed to be only the name by which we called the French authority. Their own restoration of the term 'provisional' should give us all the safeguards which we needed or were likely to get. The Allies—including the United States—were in fact treating the Committee as a provisional government. Furthermore we could hardly go on calling the French authority by a name which it had formally abolished.

- (a) The Prime Minister replied on July 19 that he disagreed with Mr. Mackenzie King's and Mr. Eden's suggestions. The President had come a long way, and the Prime Minister was not prepared to dissociate himself at this stage 'from his nomenclature'. He proposed to telegraph to Mr. Mackenzie King that we were watching the situation, but for the moment did not think it wise to go beyond the President's words. The Prime Minister's information was that General de Gaulle had come back from Washington 'in a most mischievous mood'; his accounts of the President's conversations with him were obviously intended to cause trouble between Great Britain and the United States.

Mr. Eden answered the Prime Minister on July 22. He agreed that we might defer for the time the question of adopting the French Committee's title of Provisional Government, though we should have to keep a close watch on the Americans in order to see that they did not again get ahead of us. Mr. Eden also suggested that the Prime Minister might leave out of the telegram to Mr. Mackenzie King the reference to General de Gaulle, since we had not yet sufficient evidence to say that the General had come back in a 'most mischievous mood'. The Prime Minister accepted this suggestion.

- (b) On August 17 Lord Halifax telegraphed from Washington that, according to the State Department, the President was still unwilling to treat the French Committee even as a Provisional Government. Lord Halifax's comment to the Foreign Office was that he had often put forward the view that when our interests required us to do so we ought not to hesitate to take the the lead in European questions. Lord Halifax thought that we had nothing to lose and perhaps something to gain with the Americans in forcing the pace somewhat over France.

The Foreign Office thought that this telegram gave a valuable lead for a return to the question of recognition. As soon as Paris had been liberated General de Gaulle would show himself there as head of the French Government, and the Committee itself would shortly move to France. We could not continue much longer the

(a) Z4829/1/69. (b) Z5292/5069/17.

'threadbare fiction' that there was no French Government, and that we were dealing only with a 'central authority'. We need not even make a formal act of recognition. The Committee had constituted itself the Provisional Government of the Republic by the nearest approach to legal methods open to it. All we had to do was find some graceful means of dropping the old title and using the new one.

The Foreign Office suggested that the liberation of Paris might be a good occasion for taking this step, and that we might take it by means of a letter of congratulation to General de Gaulle from His Majesty The King or from the Prime Minister on the General's entry into Paris. The letter would be addressed to General de Gaulle as President of the Provisional Government of the French Republic. We should inform the United States and Soviet Governments of our intention, but we need not ask for their approval.

Mr. Eden did not like this plan; he thought that the Prime Minister would oppose it, and that there was no need to go the hardest way to get the result which he and the Foreign Office wanted. The Prime Minister—who was in Rome—himself clinched the matter by another refusal. He telegraphed from Rome on August 22, with reference to Lord Halifax's telegram, that we (a) should make a great mistake in diverging seriously at this stage from the United States. He had earlier (August 18) sent Mr. Eden (b) a minute about the latter's conversations with M. Massigli. He said in this minute that he would deprecate for the time taking any decisions about France. If, as might easily be the case, the great success of our operations secured the liberation of the west and south of France, including Paris, there would be a large area from which a 'real' Provisional Government might be drawn, instead of a Provisional Government composed entirely of the French Committee whose interest in seizing the title deeds of France was obvious.¹ Mr. Eden replied to this minute on August 23 without reference to the question of recognition, but agreeing that we should not enter into any long term commitments as regards the post-war period until France had a more permanent form of government.

On September 10 the United States Chargé d'Affaires in Paris (c) told Mr. Holman² that he had recommended to Washington that the United States Government should recognise the French Provisional

¹ See Volume V, Chapter LXIV. General de Gaulle had not made matters easier by a refusal to see the Prime Minister during his short stay in Algiers on the way to Rome.

² British Chargé d'Affaires at Paris pending the arrival of Mr. Duff Cooper as Ambassador.

(a) Chain 163, Z5292/5069/17. (b) M(K)7/4, 5535/12/17. (c) Z5894/4034/17. (d) Z5186/1/69.

Government and appoint an Ambassador to France as soon as possible. The Foreign Office thought that, in view of a recent statement by Mr. Hull that there would be no change in American relations with France until after the holding of free elections, this recommendation would not be accepted. Mr. Eden, however, (a) decided to telegraph to the Prime Minister that he was in favour of recognition. General de Gaulle had now formed a fairly representative Provisional Government. This Government included M. Jeanneney, President of the Senate, a politician of the Right and one of the most respected men in public life in France. M. Herriot would almost certainly have been included if the Germans had not removed him. Eight of the Algiers Ministers were retiring; Communist representation continued, and the Resistance movement was strongly represented. On the whole, taking into account conditions in France, the Government seemed broad-based and well-balanced.

Mr. Eden saw no advantage in delaying our recognition of the Provisional Government. We could hardly go on addressing them as the French Committee of National Liberation—a title which they had dropped over three months ago. We had already told General de Gaulle that the appointment of M. Massigli as ‘Ambassador’ would be agreeable to H.M. the King.¹ The continued use of the term ‘Provisional’ ought to satisfy the President, since the Government would remain provisional until free elections could be held and the French people make their own choice. These elections could not take place for about a year and meanwhile conditions in France made a strong Government necessary. Mr. Eden would inform the Russians, and would like to announce on, or soon after, September 13—when Mr. Duff Cooper was arriving in France—that he was accredited to the ‘French Provisional Government’. Most Allied countries and even some neutrals were already using the term.

(b) The Prime Minister replied on September 12 that he saw no reason for ‘precipitancy’. He would show Mr. Eden’s telegram to the President, but our present intention was that the Government and

¹ On September 7 General de Gaulle asked for an *agrément* for M. Massigli as ‘French Ambassador in London’ in succession to M. Viénot. It was given on September 9. The Foreign Office realised that acceptance of this request was tantamount to recognition of the Provisional Government, but decided not to raise the question of the wording of M. Massigli’s letters of credence or to take steps to accredit Mr. Duff Cooper. In fact, M. Massigli did not bring any credentials. He came only with a letter from M. Bidault in the form used for appointing a Chargé d’Affaires. M. Massigli told Mr. Eden that he did not want to embarrass us with questions of protocol, and the Foreign Office did not bother about credentials. M. Massigli was received by H.M. the King; the Court Circular described him as ‘French representative with the personal rank of Ambassador’. After the recognition of the Provisional Government M. Massigli was accredited in the proper terms. Mr. Duff Cooper continued to be described officially as ‘British Representative’ until the recognition. He also was then accredited as Ambassador. See below, p. 85.

(a) Cordite 150 (Z5894/4034/17; Churchill Papers/182). (b) Gunfire 93 (Churchill Papers/182; Z5980/4034/17).

its foundations should be widened before we gave it further recognition. The Prime Minister did not think that ceremonial questions such as the recognition of M. Massigli as Ambassador were relevant. He could not agree to a change of policy until the matter had been carefully considered at Quebec. After Mr. Eden had left for Quebec (a) the Foreign Office heard from Mr. Duff Cooper that the first matter raised after his arrival by M. Bidault was the question of recognition. On September 16, however, Mr. Martin¹ telegraphed from Quebec (b) to the Prime Minister's office in London that the President and the Prime Minister had decided that the time had not yet come for formal recognition. On his return (September 18) Mr. Eden said that, in spite of all his efforts, he had failed to persuade them to accept the Foreign Office view that there was no reason for delay, and, indeed, that it would be difficult to explain to Parliament why we had not granted recognition.

On September 27, however, the Prime Minister telegraphed to the (c) President that on his return to England he had found a very strong feeling that we should go further towards recognising the French Government; he proposed—without committing the President—to tell Parliament that we were studying the question from week to week in the light of changing events. The President replied on (d) September 28 that in his view it would be wise to delay recognition until the Germans had been driven from the whole of France, including Alsace-Lorraine. The President had not heard whether General de Gaulle had asked for the setting up of 'Zones of the Interior' which would be the first change from a military to a civilian administration.

The Foreign Office pointed out that General de Gaulle had in fact (e) asked S.H.A.E.F. to hand over a considerable area, including Paris, as an 'Interior Zone'. Meanwhile on September 28 the Prime Minister had told Parliament that he considered the reorganisation of the French Consultative Assembly on a more representative basis as necessary before we could recognise the Provisional Government.² M. Massigli explained to Mr. Harvey on September 29 that this reorganisation would take some time; he hoped that we did not intend to wait beyond the first stage, which would be completed by the addition of nominees of the Resistance movement to the Assembly as constituted at Algiers. The Assembly thus enlarged would meet in Paris almost certainly before the end of October.

The Foreign Office thought it advisable to suggest to the Prime Minister that he should try to get the President to agree that this

¹ A member of the Prime Minister's staff.

² *Parl. Deb., 5th Series, H. of C.*, vol. 403, cols. 495-6.

(a) Z6051/4034/17. (b) Gunfire 192 (Churchill Papers/182; Z6051/4034/17).
 (c) T1828/4, No. 788 (Churchill Papers/182; Z6379/4034/17). (d) T1834/4, No. 623
 (Churchill Papers/182; Z6379/4034/17). (e) Z6751/1/69.

meeting of the Assembly in Paris would be a suitable occasion for the grant of recognition. Mr. Eden, in a speech of September 29,¹ had already said that the Prime Minister had in mind, not the convening of a Constituent Assembly after a general election—to be held when the French prisoners had returned—but the establishment of an interim consultative body.

- (a) On October 9 Lord Halifax telegraphed that the State Department were advising recognition as soon as Paris was declared an interior zone. Admiral Leahy appeared to have come round to this view. The President was away, but Lord Halifax had no indication of any change in his views. Five days later the Prime Minister—who had left, with Mr. Eden, for Moscow on October 7—telegraphed to President Roosevelt that he thought events had moved to a point where a decision could be taken about recognising the French Provisional Government. He reminded the President of his view that we should wait until France was cleared of the enemy; General de Gaulle had shown himself ready to assume full responsibility for the administration of a large part—in fact almost three-quarters—of the country as an interior zone. Mr. Churchill had himself said in Parliament that the reorganisation of the Assembly should precede recognition.

The French had now asked for the establishment of an interior zone, and General Eisenhower's negotiations with them were making good progress. Similar progress was being made in the enlargement of the Assembly. There was no doubt that the French had been co-operating with S.H.A.E.F. and that the Provisional Government had the support of the majority of Frenchmen.

Mr. Churchill therefore thought that we could now safely offer recognition as soon as the enlarged Assembly had met, and had given General de Gaulle's administration a vote of confidence. An alternative—which the Prime Minister inclined to prefer—would be to grant recognition as soon as the interior zone had been established; we should thereby connect recognition with the evidence of satisfactory French co-operation in the common cause against Germany. The Prime Minister added that we should of course inform the Soviet Government of our intention, and that recognition would not commit us on the separate question of French membership of the European Advisory Commission or similar bodies.

- (c) The Foreign Office sent on October 17 to Lord Halifax the draft text of a formula of recognition with instructions that, if the President

¹ *Id.*, *ib.*, col. 701.

(a) Z6683/4034/17. (b) T1927/4, No. 798 (Churchill Papers/182/4; Z6879/4034/17). (c) Z6879/4034/17.

accepted the Prime Minister's proposal, and if the draft were approved by the Secretary of State,¹ Lord Halifax should show it to the State Department. On October 19, however, the President (a) replied to the Prime Minister that until the French had set up a 'real' zone of the interior he did not want to make a move towards recognition. The enlargement of the Assembly was almost as important, and the President inclined to wait until the 'effective completion of both these acts'. He would not be satisfied by any mere statement of intention on the part of General de Gaulle. The President said that for the present he wanted to handle the matter directly with the Prime Minister, and would prefer that the *modus operandi* should not be discussed between the State Department and the Foreign Office.

The President's telegram included the words 'let me know your views upon this message'. Sir A. Cadogan telegraphed to Mr. Eden on the evening of October 20 that he was encouraged by these (b) words to hope that the President might change his mind and that the Prime Minister might encourage him to do so. Sir A. Cadogan said that, as Mr. Eden knew, our withholding of recognition was causing increasing bewilderment and criticism, not only in French circles. Since cordial relationship with a restored and liberated France was a vital British interest, the President might have allowed our right to a preponderating voice in the matter of recognition. Further delay merely embittered the situation and could not be explained or justified. Sir A. Cadogan asked whether the Prime Minister could be persuaded to tell the President that he saw no reason for such delay, and that our future security was in some degree at stake. Sir A. Cadogan's own view was that the date should be not later than October 27, and that the President should be so informed.

Meanwhile on October 18 Mr. Eden had telegraphed to Sir A. (c) Cadogan from Moscow that he had given M. Molotov a note setting out our views on the recognition of the French Provisional Government. He had told M. Molotov that, if the Soviet Government agreed, we wanted to recognise the Provisional Government as soon as the interior zone was established. M. Molotov asked whether we were satisfied with the policy of the French Government; Mr. Eden replied that General de Gaulle was a difficult man, but that in our view the French Government would have sufficient authority to merit recognition when it was in control of the interior zone.

M. Molotov reminded Mr. Eden that in the past we and the

¹ Mr. Eden was in Moscow from October 9 to October 18. Mr. Churchill returned to London *via* Cairo; Mr. Eden stayed on in Cairo and then visited General Alexander in Italy.

(a) T1941/4, No. 631 (Churchill Papers/182/4; Z6879/4034/17). (b) Z6879/4034/17. (c) Z6925/4034/17.

Americans had suggested to the Soviet Government that the French Government should not be recognised. Our new initiative would give the impression that the Soviet Government had been holding back. In any case, however, the Soviet Government would now recognise the French Government.¹

- In spite of the President's message of October 19, the final initiative in the recognition was taken—somewhat unexpectedly—by the
- (a) United States Government. Mr. Peake² telephoned at midnight on October 20–1 that the State Department had sent a 'most immediate' telegram—dated 11 p.m. October 19—to Mr. Caffery, United States diplomatic representative in Paris, instructing him to inform the French Minister for Foreign Affairs in the strictest confidence (for communication only to General de Gaulle) that the United States Government were prepared to recognise the French Provisional Government on the publication of a decree regarding the zone of the interior. Mr. Caffery had acted at once on these instructions. On the morning of October 21 a statement appeared in the press that, according to an announcement by the Provisional Government, a zone of the interior would become effective from that day. The British Government knew at this time that the announcement would soon be made but they had previously been assured that the earliest date would be October 23. Mr. Caffery had
 - (b) telephoned about 7.30 p.m. on October 20 to say that he would like to see Mr. Duff Cooper at once. He then came to tell Mr. Duff Cooper that the President had agreed to recognise the French Government as soon as an announcement was made regarding the zone of the interior. He did not say that his instructions were to make a communication to this effect to M. Bidault and that he had already made the communication.
 - (c) On the morning of October 21 Mr. Duff Cooper again saw Mr. Caffery. Mr. Caffery showed him the text of the telegram from Washington—signed by Mr. Hull—and including a sentence that Mr. Duff Cooper would receive similar immediate instructions and would inform M. Bidault. Mr. Caffery admitted that he had been precipitate in going to M. Bidault, and, although he did not say so,

¹ M. Molotov also complained that the British press had referred to Soviet objections to recognition, although in fact no objections had been made. He thought that the British press had not been sufficiently informed about the support given to our policy by the Soviet Government. The Foreign Office could find no ground whatever for M. Molotov's complaint about the press.

² Mr. Peake had been British Representative with the French National Committee in London from February 1942 to October 1943. In October 1943 he was appointed Political Liaison Officer, with the personal rank of Minister, with the Supreme Allied Commander.

(a) Z7000/4034/17. (b) Z6992/4034/17. (c) Z7004/4034/17.

his manner showed some consciousness of the fact that he ought to have told Mr. Duff Cooper what he had done. Sir A. Cadogan telegraphed this information to the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden with the comment that the action of the State Department seemed incomprehensible in view of the President's reply to the Prime Minister. Sir A. Cadogan also asked Lord Halifax urgently for an explanation. Later on October 21 Lord Halifax reported that the State Department maintained that they had given no instructions to Mr. Caffery but merely sent him a summary of the President's message to the Prime Minister. They had not asked Mr. Caffery to say anything to the French; they repeated that, as far as they knew, the President had not yet made up his mind. They could suppose only that Mr. Caffery had misunderstood their telegram.¹

At 11 a.m. on October 22 the Counsellor of the United States Embassy in London telephoned to the Foreign Office that they had received a telegram from Washington to the effect that the President had decided to recognise the French Provisional Government simultaneously with the announcement by the French of the creation of an interior zone. The President intended to release this news at 12 noon (Washington time) on October 23. The British Embassy in Washington had been asked to inform the Foreign Office accordingly so that the announcement might be made at the same time (5 p.m. British summer time) in London.

Since there was now no doubt about the intentions of the United States Government, the Foreign Office instructed Mr. Duff Cooper in the early afternoon of October 22 to tell M. Bidault in the utmost confidence that the British Government had also decided upon recognition on the occasion of the announcement of the interior zone, and that a formal communication to this effect would be made on October 23. Sir A. Clark Kerr was instructed at the same time on October 22 to tell M. Molotov of the American decision and of the instructions sent to Mr. Duff Cooper and to explain that we were in no way responsible for the very short notice which M. Molotov was being given, but that we hoped that the Soviet Government would join the United States Government and ourselves in a simultaneous recognition of the French Provisional Government.

Sir A. Cadogan also informed Mr. Eden of his action. He wrote a minute for the Prime Minister, who was on his way back from Caserta, explaining the reasons for acting quickly if we were not to be left behind by the Americans. The Prime Minister had in fact

¹ This explanation does not altogether agree with the text of the telegram as printed in *F.R.U.S.*, 1944, III, 741-2, though the wording of the telegram is open to some ambiguity and could have misled Mr. Caffery.

(a) Z7000/4034/17. (b) Z7002/4034/17. (c) Z7024/4034/17. (d) T1946/4, No. 801 (Churchill Papers/182; Z7247/4034/17).

answered Mr. Roosevelt's telegram on October 22. He had said that he would consult the War Cabinet on his return to London. Opinion in the United Kingdom was very strongly in favour of immediate recognition. General de Gaulle was no longer sole master but was 'better harnessed than ever before'. He would make all the mischief in his power, but when General Eisenhower had proclaimed a large zone of the interior for France, we could not delay a limited form of recognition. General de Gaulle undoubtedly had the majority of the French nation behind him, and the French Government needed support against potential anarchy in large areas.

- (a) After his arrival in London the Prime Minister sent a message to the President that, in view of his (the President's) last telegram, he was naturally surprised at the very sharp turn taken by the State Department. The Prime Minister thought that the Russians would probably be offended. M. Molotov had said in conversation that he expected that the Russians would be made to appear as obstructing a decision, whereas in fact they would have recognised the French Government long ago but for American and British wishes to the contrary.
- (b) The President replied that both Moscow and London had 'timely informatibn' about the American announcement, but that he regretted that his absence from Washington had resulted in more precipitate action by the State Department than he had contemplated in his message of October 20. Lord Halifax had already told the State Department that Mr. Caffery's action in speaking to M. Bidault without consulting or even informing Mr. Duff Cooper would cause a painful impression in London. The State Department agreed, and were instructing Mr. Caffery that he should co-operate fully and closely with Mr. Duff Cooper.
- (d) The actual terms of the formal communication made by Mr. Duff Cooper on October 23 were as follows:

'The Supreme Allied Commander has reached agreement with the competent French authorities regarding the transfer of the larger part of France, including Paris, from a forward to an interior zone as defined in Memorandum No. 1 of the Civil Affairs Agreement of August 25 last. This means that the conduct of the administration of the area of France in question and the responsibility therefor is now a matter for the Central French authority, which thus effectively exercises powers of government in that area.

His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom have decided

(a) T1951/4. No. 803 (Churchill Papers/182; Z7342/4034/17). (b) T1960/4, No. 633 (Churchill Papers/182; Z7175/4034/17). (c) Z7075/4034/17. (d) Z7025/4034/17.

that this circumstance makes it appropriate that they should recognise the present French administration as the Provisional Government of France and henceforward treat it on that basis. In consequence His Majesty's Government consider it desirable that their representation in Paris should be placed on a more regular footing and that their Representative should be accredited to the Provisional Government as His Majesty's Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary. They will be glad to learn whether the Provisional Government would be willing to accept Mr. Duff Cooper in that capacity.¹

(iv)

The Prime Minister's visit to Paris: Anglo-French conversations in Paris, November 11-12, 1944.

On September 27, 1944, Mr. Duff Cooper telegraphed to Mr. (a) Eden that he had heard from S.H.A.E.F. that the Prime Minister was thinking of a visit to Paris in the following week. Mr. Duff Cooper thought that it would be most undesirable for the Prime Minister, if he came to Paris, to stay at General Eisenhower's headquarters at Versailles, since he would give the impression that he had come to visit the Anglo-American forces rather than the French people.

Mr. Eden replied on September 30 that the Prime Minister's plans (b) were uncertain, but that he would give Mr. Duff Cooper the longest possible notice if he should decide to come to France. Mr. Duff Cooper wrote privately to Mr. Eden on October 6 repeating his view that a visit by the Prime Minister only to S.H.A.E.F. would look like a deliberate insult to the Provisional Government and the French people, and that it would go far to ruin the great popularity

¹ On October 2 the French Provisional Government, which had already been invited by the chairman of the European Advisory Commission to take part in the consideration of German affairs, had applied to the British, American, and Soviet Governments for membership of the Commission in order to share in 'the task of the reconstruction and reorganisation of Europe'. The United States Government was willing to show to the French the text of the German surrender terms and to invite them to consult with E.A.C. regarding these terms but to do so on the understanding that such consultation would not in any way 'prejudice our [U.S.] position with respect to including France in the control machinery for Germany'. On November 6 the Soviet Ambassador in Paris (to the surprise of the Americans) said that the Soviet Government had come to the conclusion that France should be admitted to permanent membership of the Commission. The British Government, in an *aide-mémoire* of November 7 to the United States Government, were (c) in favour of granting the French request 'as a logical next step along the road towards her (France's) restoration as a great power'. With the agreement of the United States a formal invitation was sent to the French Provisional Government to join the Commission as the fourth permanent member.

(a) Paris tel. 133, Prisec. (b) Tel. 80 to Paris, Prisec. (c) U8065/3/70.

- of the English in France. Nearly three weeks later—on October 25—
- (a) Mr. Holman reported that M. Bidault had told him in confidence that General de Gaulle had decided to invite the Prime Minister to visit Paris.¹ General de Gaulle hoped that Mr. Eden would come with the Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister received this invitation through the French Embassy in London. On November 2, after the Prime Minister's acceptance had been received, General de Gaulle discussed with Mr. Duff Cooper a programme for the visit. General de Gaulle hoped that he might have an opportunity of discussing political matters with the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden. The Prime Minister agreed with this suggestion. M. Massigli later gave the Foreign Office a list of subjects which the French Government wished to discuss. In view of the large field covered by this list Mr. Eden thought it desirable to ask Mr. Duff Cooper to explain that we were not intending anything like a formal conference, and that neither he (Mr. Eden) nor the Prime Minister would be able to go exhaustively into so many subjects. The main purpose of the visit was to demonstrate Anglo-French friendship rather than to examine and settle a wide range of

(b) complicated international issues. M. Bidault, however, made it clear that the French were not thinking of anything like a formal conference; nevertheless he felt strongly that unless conversations took place towards a better understanding the relations between the Prime Minister and General de Gaulle might get worse.

The visit, however, went off far more satisfactorily than M. Bidault and Mr. Duff Cooper—and the Foreign Office—had expected.

(c) The Prime Minister had an informal discussion with General de Gaulle in the afternoon of November 11. General de Gaulle's first question was whether the French Government could be given arms and equipment for the eight divisions which they wished to raise. He said that he realised that the usefulness of providing this equipment must depend on the duration of the war. The Prime Minister said that the war might end in three or four months, but that a spring campaign and perhaps also a summer campaign were not unlikely. He promised to do his best to help with British equipment, possibly not of the most modern type, but something which could be replaced later by better material from other sources. The Americans were expecting to finish the war before any divisions now being raised could be used effectively. They therefore wished to keep the available shipping for the transport of fully trained American troops and to postpone bringing arms for the French.

¹ I have found no evidence to show whether General de Gaulle decided upon this invitation after hearing 'unofficially' that the Prime Minister would welcome it.

(a) Paris tel. 311, Prisc. (b) Z7583/4034/17. (c) E7627/217/89.

General de Gaulle said that Great Britain and France were perhaps more interested than the Americans in what would happen after the war. France would be in a difficult position if she were to be associated in the post-war settlement without having taken part in the defeat of Germany. The Prime Minister recognised the importance of General de Gaulle's argument, and hoped that the French would be able to get more troops into the line if the war lasted another six months. He pointed out, however, that the equipment and organisation of troops for occupational purposes was a different problem from equipment and organisation for war, and that, with their armies heavily engaged, the generals had to think in terms of immediate need.

The Prime Minister told General de Gaulle that the British Government would be glad to hand over for occupation by the French some part of Germany at present allotted to British occupation. He explained in general terms the provisional demarcation of German territory into three zones of occupation. General de Gaulle said that the French would require the allocation to themselves of a definite zone, not only as a symbol of French participation in the occupation, but also because they wanted to cover their own eastern frontier. The Prime Minister and Mr. Eden agreed that a specific zone should be given to the French.

General de Gaulle then raised the question of a joint Anglo-French policy on the treatment of occupied Germany, and asked what were Stalin's views on the question. The Prime Minister said that in the long run the French, who knew most about Germany, were the people most interested in the treatment of the country after the war. The matter had not been discussed with Stalin. General de Gaulle said that he understood that there was as yet no accepted policy regarding the treatment of Germany. The Prime Minister said that there was a growing military doctrine based on the establishment of strong points where there would be aircraft in force and mobile columns with carriers and tanks. He thought that after their unconditional surrender the Germans would be made to do the local police work under the authority of the Allies. For this reason the military organisation contemplated for the occupation differed from that required for battle purposes.

General de Gaulle then asked whether there were any plans for the control of German industry. The Prime Minister said that the question had been discussed at Teheran and touched upon in Moscow and at Quebec but that no decision had been reached. It was agreed, however, that the Saar and Ruhr could not again become arsenals of German armament. The metallurgical industries there would have to be deprived of their resources so that the countries devastated by the enemy could be re-equipped with material, tools, etc. German

war industries would have to be disarmed. Mr. Eden added that we had been considering the question of the international control of the Rhine and the Saar.¹

The Prime Minister said that the Russians and Americans had very severe views on the treatment of Germany, and that a partition of the country had been considered. He then gave General de Gaulle an outline of the proposals with regard to the Polish-German frontier. He said that the Germans would have room in Germany for the populations from the territories which they would lose, and that there was no need for anxiety about the proposed transfer; the exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey had led to excellent Greco-Turkish relations.

General de Gaulle thought it important that we should not agree to a Russian scheme for ruling Poland through a puppet Government. The Prime Minister said that the Russians had given explicit assurances that they did not intend to aim at the sovietisation of any of the Balkan countries or of Poland. The Prime Minister was convinced of the sincerity of these assurances.

The Prime Minister explained that, until the conclusion of a peace or long-term armistice, no territorial changes would be recognised unless agreed upon by the parties concerned. We had told the Poles that we would support the Russian claim to the Curzon line. We asked for nothing for ourselves, and, above all, we wanted nothing from our French Ally.

General de Gaulle asked whether there had been discussions at Quebec about the American desire for bases overseas which President Roosevelt had mentioned to him in Washington. He had told the President that the French would not be willing to cede territory in order to provide bases for the Americans, but they that were ready to discuss an international system under which certain bases might be made available internationally without a change of sovereignty. The Prime Minister agreed that some such scheme might be feasible; there could, however, be no question of surrendering national sovereignty though the Americans might keep bases in the Pacific which they had seized from Japan in the war.

General de Gaulle spoke again of the French wish to take part in the fighting, and the immense moral effect upon the French people if they knew that Great Britain was giving them arms and equipment. The Prime Minister repeated that he would do his best in the matter after discussing it with the Americans. General de Gaulle said that French policy would be based on an alliance with Great Britain and Russia and friendship with the United States, but it would be of no service to the latter to foster the illusions which some Americans

¹ See also Volume V, Chapter LXIV.

entertained of a complete international 'new deal'. The Prime Minister said that Great Britain must, and in his opinion would carry the Americans and Russians with them. After some discussion on Syria and the Lebanon,¹ the Prime Minister said that the possession of large colonial territories would be less important in the coming years than the possession of striking power. Navies were losing some of their importance and colonial possessions might sometimes be more of a liability than an asset, as Great Britain's balance sheet with India now showed. He felt that the greatest problem of the French Government was that of restoring the internal economy of France. If he might venture to advise, he would recommend General de Gaulle to go ahead with the reconstruction of a strong French army, and to adapt the organisation of the army to the probable development of events. He said that he had seen much evidence of the degree of stability which General de Gaulle and his Government had succeeded in introducing and that he would like to congratulate them on their progress.

In the evening of November 11 General de Gaulle had some conversation with Sir A. Cadogan on the question of Syria² and on proposals for a regional agreement among the Western European Powers.³ General de Gaulle had already received hints from the Soviet Government that they were not in favour of such an agreement. Sir A. Cadogan said that Stalin himself had raised the question with us in December 1941, and had told us that he approved of the idea. We had proposed the insertion of the chapter on regionalism at the recent Dumbarton Oaks conference; Sir A. Cadogan had then explained our plan to the American and Soviet delegates, and they had at once accepted it. General de Gaulle said that he also felt that, owing to her military weakness, the present time was not favourable for France to negotiate a regional agreement. Sir A. Cadogan answered that we should negotiate only on the assumption that France would be fully restored to strength.

On November 12 Mr. Eden and M. Bidault met for a discussion of the international position.⁴ M. Bidault asked whether Mr. Eden could tell him anything of M. Spaak's conversations in London.⁵ Mr. Eden said that no definite agreement had been made with M. Spaak. M. Spaak had suggested that the time was suitable for an agreement, but Mr. Eden had pointed out that we needed discussions with the French and the Dutch. M. Spaak had then submitted some written proposals of a rather general kind which we had not yet considered.

¹ See Volume IV, Chapter LV.

² See Volume IV, Chapter LV.

³ See Volume V, Chapter LXIV.

⁴ Mr. Duff Cooper, Sir A. Cadogan, M. Massigli and M. Chauvel (Secretary-General at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) were also present.

⁵ See Volume V, Chapter LXIV. M. Spaak wanted a Western Defence *bloc*.

M. Bidault said that steps must be taken at the Peace Conference to ensure that Germany, and especially the Rhineland, did not again become a danger to peace. There was a strong feeling in France that the Western Powers must control the economy of the Rhineland. Mr. Eden agreed with M. Bidault. He said that the European Advisory Commission had drafted only the terms of German surrender, but that they would now have to consider these other problems. France, Russia, and other countries would have claims on much of the equipment of the Rhineland; after these claims had been satisfied, the area must be controlled. M. Bidault said that the controls must cover the rest of Germany, and must include heavy industry, and also the work on new inventions. M. Bidault mentioned in this connexion the need to control the German universities. He also referred with satisfaction to the Prime Minister's promise of a zone of occupation for France. The discussion then turned to other matters, and particularly the Levant.¹ Later in the day General de Gaulle asked Mr. Eden if he could tell him more about the agreement for the delimitation of three zones of occupation in Germany. Mr. Eden showed him on a map the general lines of demarcation and the possibility of giving the French a zone in the area assigned to British occupation. General de Gaulle appeared to be satisfied with this proposal.

- (a) The Prime Minister, after his return from France, sent a message to the President that he had had a 'wonderful reception' and had re-established friendly private relations with General de Gaulle who was 'better since he has lost a large part of his inferiority complex'. The Prime Minister added that, in spite of statements to the contrary in the French press, he had not reached any decisions with the French in Paris. All his discussions on important matters had taken place 'on an *ad referendum* basis to the three Great Powers', and especially to the President, since the Americans had by far the largest forces in France. General de Gaulle had asked the Prime Minister a number of questions which had shown how little the French knew about the decisions already taken or under consideration. General de Gaulle wanted equipment for eight more divisions, but S.H.A.E.F. had reasonably argued that these divisions would not be ready before the defeat of Germany in the field and that shipping must be used for the upkeep of the actual forces which would win the battles of the winter and spring.

The Prime Minister told the President that he sympathised with the French wish to take a larger share in the fighting, and not to have to go into Germany as so-called conquerors who had not fought. The important consideration for France, however, was to have an

¹ See Volume IV, Chapter LV.

(a) T2122/4, No. 822 (Churchill Papers/182; Z7863/7440/17).

army prepared for the tasks which it would have to fulfil, namely—first, to maintain a peaceful and orderly France behind the front of our armies, and secondly to assist later on in holding down parts of Germany.

The Prime Minister said that he had also expressed sympathy with the French wish to have a share in the occupation of Germany, not merely under British or American command, but under a command of their own. The Prime Minister told the President that he had in mind that there would be a time not many years distant when the American armies would go home and we should have great difficulty in maintaining large forces overseas 'so contrary to our mode of life and disproportionate to our resources'.

The Prime Minister had not agreed upon the assignment of particular areas to the French. He had merely said that we should certainly favour the French taking over as large an area as they could manage—'the less we had of it, the better we should be pleased'. He thought that this and other questions requiring decision at a level above that of the High Commands necessitated a meeting of the Four Powers, if Stalin would come to it, or at all events a meeting in which the French were included. Before five years were over, there must be a French army to take on the main task of holding down Germany. The Prime Minister had formed a very good opinion of M. Bidault, and had felt generally 'in the presence of an organised Government, broadly based and of rapidly growing strength'. He was certain that we should be unwise to do anything to weaken the French Government in the eyes of France and that we could safely bring them more into our confidence.

(v)

Conclusion of a Franco-Soviet Pact of Mutual Assistance: French misunderstanding of the British attitude towards the Pact (December 2-10, 1944).

In spite of the friendliness of General de Gaulle's reception of the Prime Minister in Paris a visit by the General to Moscow at the beginning of December was the occasion of sharp complaint from the French about the attitude of Great Britain. On December 2 Stalin sent a message to the Prime Minister that General de Gaulle (a) would probably ask for a Franco-Soviet Pact of Mutual Assistance similar to the Anglo-Soviet Pact. He was also likely to raise the question of extending the French frontier to the left bank of the Rhine. Stalin referred to the scheme for a Rhenish-Westphalian province under international control,¹ and said that this scheme

¹ See Volume V, Chapter LXIV.

(a) T2233/4 (Churchill Papers/173; N7675/1652/38).

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would 'compete with' the French plan. He asked the Prime Minister for his advice on each of the two questions General de Gaulle was likely to raise.

The Foreign Office thought that we must certainly welcome the proposal for a pact, but that there were two possibilities: (a) the conclusion of a Franco-Soviet Pact on lines parallel with the Anglo-Soviet Pact, (b) the transformation of the latter into a tripartite pact by the inclusion of France. As regards (a) it was important to ensure that a Franco-Soviet Pact followed as closely as possible the terms of the Anglo-Soviet Pact, since otherwise there might be conflicting obligations which it would be difficult to resolve, and France might be bound more closely to Moscow than to London. In any case, unless there were a corresponding Anglo-French treaty, public opinion in Great Britain and elsewhere might assume that France was so bound. On the other hand we had to take into account that General de Gaulle might press the Russians strongly for a separate Franco-Soviet pact if only to assert the independence of France and as evidence that she was now on a basis of full equality with Great Britain. The Foreign Office recommended that the Prime Minister should reply to Stalin that we should welcome the conclusion of a Franco-Soviet Pact similar to the Anglo-Soviet Pact. We thought, however, that the best plan might be a tripartite treaty which would embody in its terms the existing Anglo-Soviet treaty.

- (a) On December 3 the Prime Minister received a second telegram from Stalin¹ to the effect that General de Gaulle had raised the two matters which he (Stalin) had expected him to raise. Stalin had told the French that no decision about the French eastern frontier could be taken without the knowledge and agreement of 'our chief allies whose armies are waging a battle of liberation against the enemy on the territory of France'. On the subject of a Franco-Soviet pact Stalin had pointed out the necessity of a study of the question; the juridical aspect of the pact would have to be clarified, and there was also 'the question who would ratify such a pact in France in present conditions'.
- (b) After a discussion in the War Cabinet the Prime Minister sent a message to Stalin in the sense of the Foreign Office recommendations on the night of December 4-5. He also said that the question of the French frontier and other alternatives for Rhenish Westphalia

¹ The recommendations made by the Foreign Office on December 4 were put forward before a copy of this second message had been received in the Office, but both telegrams were discussed at a Cabinet meeting at 6 p.m. on December 4, and Mr. Eden was asked to draft a reply. The Prime Minister approved (and slightly modified) the draft. The reply was despatched at 5 a.m. on December 5.

(a) T2250/4 (Churchill Papers/173; N7675/1652.38). (b) T2258/4 (N7675/1652/38; Churchill Papers/173). (c) WM(44)161.10, C.A.

ought to await the Peace Conference. The Prime Minister suggested that there was no reason why the three Heads of Government, at their forthcoming meeting, should not get much closer to decisions on the frontier question. President Roosevelt did not expect General de Gaulle to come to the meeting, but Mr. Churchill hoped that the President would agree to bring him in later on when decisions affecting France were under discussion. The Prime Minister sent a copy of his telegram to President Roosevelt with a covering message (a) that he thought a tripartite treaty the best plan.

On the night of December 5 Sir A. Clark Kerr telegraphed that (b) M. Bidault had told him that at the first meeting with General de Gaulle Stalin had suggested a Franco-Soviet Pact: General de Gaulle had welcomed the suggestion and had submitted a text to the Russians. M. Bidault said that the French Government wished also to conclude a long-term agreement with Great Britain. He did not mention the question of the French frontier. Sir A. Clark Kerr promised to report M. Bidault's information, and added that he was sure that we should find it very natural that the French Government would wish to conclude a pact with the Russians on lines similar to the Anglo-Soviet treaty.

On the evening of December 6 Mr. Balfour¹ reported from Moscow (c) that M. Dejean, who had accompanied General de Gaulle and M. Bidault, had told him that the French hoped to conclude a Franco-Soviet pact during their visit to Moscow. The pact would be similar to the Anglo-Soviet treaty with certain clauses adapted to meet the changed conditions. M. Molotov had asked the French Ministers whether they proposed to conclude a similar pact with Great Britain. They had replied 'Yes.' M. Dejean—unlike M. Bidault—also said that the French had told the Russians of their interest in securing the Rhine frontier. He added that the French Government realised that the question could not be decided apart from a general German settlement.

On December 6 President Roosevelt telegraphed to the Prime (d) Minister that he was in general agreement with him on the two questions which General de Gaulle had raised in Moscow. He was inclined to think that a separate Franco-Soviet Pact would be better than a tripartite pact, since the latter might seem to public opinion in the United States 'a competitor to a future world organisation'. The President thought that the question of the French frontier should be kept for discussion at the forthcoming meeting; he still held to his view that any attempt to include General de Gaulle in

¹ Chargé d'Affaires at Moscow in Sir A. Clark Kerr's absence.

(a) T2268/4, No. 846 (Churchill Papers/173; N7675/1652/38). (b) 7657/1652/68.
(c) N7658/1652/38. (d) T2275/4 No. 670, (Churchill Papers/173; N7713/1652/38).

the meeting 'would merely introduce a complicating and undesirable factor'.¹

- (a) On December 7 Stalin telegraphed to the Prime Minister that he and his colleagues had begun discussions with the French about a pact, but that they agreed with the British suggestion for an Anglo-Franco-Soviet pact, and had made a proposal accordingly to
- (b) General de Gaulle. Mr. Balfour reported, however, on the morning of December 8 that on the previous evening M. Bidault had told him that M. Molotov was now unwilling to consider a separate Franco-Soviet Pact because the Prime Minister wanted a tripartite pact.

M. Bidault said, with great emotion, that General de Gaulle was much distressed at this unexpected development. We had not mentioned a tripartite pact during the visit of the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden to Paris. The suggestion for a Franco-Soviet Pact had come from Stalin, and the French, who had hoped for such a proposal, had submitted a text. The Soviet Government had produced another draft, and then had come this 'coup prodigieux'. The unexpected intervention of a Power not a party to the negotiations had revived all past feelings of French bitterness against Great Britain. Our action was the more undeserved because, solely out of regard for the British Government, the French had held out against insistent Russian pressure that they should give a very wide degree of approval to the Lublin Committee. They had refused to do more than send an officer to Lublin to look after their escaped prisoners of war.

Mr. Balfour pointed out that the French interpretation of what had happened bore no relation to the facts. He told M. Bidault of Stalin's message to the Prime Minister, and the latter's reply. If General de Gaulle had put the same question to the Prime Minister he would have had the same reply. (M. Bidault here pleaded rather lamely that owing to the difficulty of cypher communications General de Gaulle had been unable to consult the British Government.) Mr. Balfour said that General de Gaulle ought to interpret the Prime Minister's attitude as a most welcome proof—if any were needed—that we regarded the future welfare of Europe as inseparable from the establishment of a common agreement between France, the U.S.S.R. and Great Britain.

- (c) M. Bidault then calmed down, but made it plain that in his anger General de Gaulle had brought up every possible argument against

(d) ¹ The President also sent to the Prime Minister on the same day a copy of a telegram to Stalin stating that the United States Government would not object to a Franco-Soviet pact and that the frontier settlement should be postponed until after the collapse of Germany.

(a) T2287/4, Churchill Papers/173. (b) N7695/1652/38. (c) N7696/1652/38. (d) T2273/4, No. 668 (Churchill Papers/173; N7712/1652/38).

the adherence of France to a tripartite pact. Most of these arguments could be summed up in a statement that France could not subscribe to such a plan while she was still a 'poor relation' dependent on the good graces of others for the rightful place in Europe which she would soon recover. France had difficult problems, e.g. the Levant question, which she preferred to settle directly with us before considering whether to undertake larger multilateral commitments which were bound up, in any case, with the settlement of the French eastern frontier. M. Bidault even referred to French misgivings that Great Britain would return to a policy of 'splendid isolation' after the war. Finally, he said, 'with a sad smile', that General de Gaulle would not attend any more international conferences unless he were certain beforehand that France would be treated as an equal.

Mr. Eden approved of Mr. Balfour's reply to M. Bidault and also instructed him to tell M. Bidault of the actual words of our reply to the Soviet Government. We considered that the latter had been most correct in consulting us, and that it would have been a good thing if the French had done likewise. We had made it clear that we had not the slightest wish to stand in the way of a Franco-Soviet pact. Mr. Balfour was also instructed to tell the Soviet Government of M. Bidault's representations to us and of our reply.

The French Ministers had left Moscow before Mr. Balfour was (a) able to carry out these instructions. They had concluded a bilateral pact with the Soviet Government and had gone away almost immediately after its signature. Sir O. Sargent, however, explained the whole matter to M. Massigli. Mr. Balfour thought that our explanation (b) had satisfied the French; the French Chargé d'Affaires had said (c) that M. Bidault had been so much disturbed that he had given a wrong impression of M. Molotov's statement. M. Molotov had spoken in terms which corresponded almost exactly to the Prime Minister's message to Stalin.¹

(vi)

Proposals for an Anglo-French treaty: the Prime Minister's arguments in favour of delay: French insistence upon securing a general settlement of outstanding questions: difficulties with General de Gaulle: failure of proposals for the opening of negotiations for a treaty (January 1–August 6, 1945).

Before concluding their treaty with the U.S.S.R. the French (d) Government had let the Foreign Office know that they intended to suggest an Anglo-French treaty on similar lines. They wanted,

¹ M. Massigli was of the opinion that the Soviet Government had used the Prime Minister's message suggesting a tripartite treaty as a means of pressure on the French to recognise the Lublin Committee. (e)

(a) N7721/1652/38. (b) U8745/180/70. (c) N7804/1652/38. (d) U8710/180/70.
(e) U8745, 8747/180/70; U8836/8696/70.

however, first to reach agreement on a number of subjects relating to the future of Germany. Mr. Eden thought it advisable to accept the French suggestion. The basis of the treaty of alliance would be the commitment of either party, subject to some general reservation of the overriding powers of a World Organisation, to come to the assistance of the other in the event of an attack by Germany. Such an alliance would not conflict with the Dumbarton Oaks proposals and might form the nucleus of a future Western European defensive group. The Russians and Americans approved of the plan.

The Foreign Office considered that we should not take the initiative in the matter, since we did not want to give the wrong impression that we were specially anxious to get an alliance and that we would make concessions in order to do so. If negotiations took place, we should be willing to accept an alliance on the general lines of the Anglo-Soviet and Franco-Soviet treaties. We should also say that, after the establishment of a World Organisation, it might be possible to secure a tripartite pact of a general nature to the effect that the three parties would pursue a common policy towards Germany and would give one another mutual support. Since the French had now concluded a bilateral pact with the U.S.S.R. it would be impracticable to make this tripartite agreement before the establishment of the World Organisation. We might also take the opportunity to discuss with the French the question of establishing some machinery for regional defence in Western Europe. We should, however, avoid accepting any proposal (beyond our existing commitments) which made us responsible for guaranteeing the territorial integrity or independence of France or of our other Western Allies.¹

- (a) On January 3, 1945, M. Massigli asked Mr. Eden whether he could give him any idea of the kind of pact which His Majesty's Government would be willing to sign. Mr. Eden said that such a pact would presumably be directed against a revival of German aggression, and that it should fit into the security arrangements reached at Dumbarton Oaks, and should be limited in scope to Europe. M. Massigli agreed to ask the French Government to put forward their views.
- (b) On January 22 M. Massigli again made it clear that the French Government were anxious to conclude a treaty. The Foreign Office

¹ The Dumbarton Oaks proposals (see below, Vol. V, ch LXIII) did not include guarantees of territorial integrity and political independence, whereas M. Spaak's proposals specifically envisaged such guarantees. Hence, as the Foreign Office pointed out, there might be a conflict between the two sets of obligations if we introduced M. Spaak's principles into any treaties which we might make with Western European countries. At the same time we did not wish to give these countries the impression that we wanted to 'run out' of our existing obligations—there were, for example, some grounds for arguing that we were still bound by the 1937 guarantee to Belgium—or to leave them to their fate.

(a) U102/1,70. (b) U619,1,70; Z1176/13/17.

had prepared a draft but were waiting for a definite statement of French views. On February 5 General de Gaulle broadcast a speech (a) in which he referred to the French wish for an alliance with Great Britain. The opening of discussions was delayed, however, because the French view seemed to be that the treaty should cover all outstanding questions between the two countries. The French also appeared to be awaiting an initiative from the British side. Mr. Duff Cooper was in favour of a British approach in order to soften the effect on the French of the refusal to invite them to the Yalta Conference.

The Prime Minister wrote to Mr. Eden on February 5 that he (b) hoped we should keep to the policy of awaiting French proposals. There was no need for haste; the French had as yet nothing to give to an alliance. We should not appear as suppliants, and thereby allow General de Gaulle 'every opportunity for misbehaviour'. The Foreign Office, while agreeing about the disadvantage of appearing as 'suppliants', were also aware of the risks of letting matters drift with the French. They pointed out that our existing goodwill among the French people might be a wasting asset and France, under the influence of the hypersensitive nationalism of General de Gaulle, might well move closer to Russia or even into isolationism. We wanted close Anglo-French co-operation; we might do well, while French policy was still fluid, to try to set it in a favourable direction.

Mr. Eden hoped that some progress might be made during M. Bidault's visit to London in the last week of February 1945. Mr. Eden had suggested this visit in order that he might give (c) M. Bidault an account of the work of the Yalta Conference and also discuss generally with him Anglo-French relations. M. Bidault was in some difficulty about accepting the invitation. He told Mr. Duff Cooper on February 19 that he would gladly come, but that he (d) expected opposition to his acceptance from General de Gaulle. General de Gaulle had been in an angry mood over the rejection of the demands put forward by the French for an invitation to the Yalta Conference. In fact the British Government would have been (e) willing to agree to French representation, at all events on limited terms, but President Roosevelt strongly opposed it. The French (f) Government sent a formal note to the British, United States, and Soviet Governments on January 18, asking for an invitation. Again Mr. Eden was in favour of admitting the French claim to be represented, but the Prime Minister thought it impossible to make a

(a) U1416/1/70. (b) Z2029/13/17. (c) Z2361/13/17. (d) Z2359/13/17. (e) Z1187/514/17. (f) Z1187, 1236, 1237/514/17.

- (a) change. The Prime Minister wrote a minute to Mr. Eden on January 25 that the President would 'take it amiss' if we suggested introducing the French, and that the whole character of the discussions would be changed if General de Gaulle were present at them. We could, however, discuss the question of including the French at a later date.

- General de Gaulle showed his anger at the refusal to invite French representation by rejecting an invitation from the President to meet him at Algiers on his (the President's) way back to the United States. General de Gaulle knew that the President's opposition had been the main reason for the exclusion of France from the Conference.¹ He was further annoyed at the message sent to him from the Conference, and also thought that the President, who was returning by ship, might have called at Marseilles.

- Nonetheless General de Gaulle consented to M. Bidault's acceptance of the British invitation, and M. Bidault came to England on February 25. He saw Mr. Eden on this day, and on February 26 had a conversation with the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden.² The conversations were not very useful. M. Bidault's main theme was the position of France in relation to the three major Allies. He argued that the situation for France would soon become impossible if the 'Big Three' were not transformed into the 'Big Four'. It was made clear to him that we wished to associate France with ourselves as far as possible, but that the 'Big Three' were in a special position owing to their responsibility for the conduct of the war, and that they must be able to meet when circumstances required. Mr. Eden explained that, in addition to the arrangements made at Yalta for giving France a zone of occupation and a seat on the Control Commission, and for associating her with the invitation to San Francisco and the declaration on Liberated Europe, there was a possibility that France might be invited to the next meeting of Foreign Secretaries. M. Bidault, however, continued to argue on the subject.

M. Bidault said that the French Government wanted a treaty with Great Britain, but thought it necessary first to reach general agreement with His Majesty's Government as regards Germany and the Levant. They were unwilling to conclude treaties on the model

- ¹ Mr. Hopkins paid a visit to Paris early in February. According to information received (d) by Mr. Duff Cooper, Mr. Hopkins told General de Gaulle that he would find the United States more sympathetic than Great Britain with the French view of the future of Germany. He also tried—without success—to defend United States policy towards Marshal Pétain and Admiral Darlan.

² No record was made of the second conversation, at which the Prime Minister was present, but a Foreign Office minute noted that no fresh points were brought up at it, and the discussion continued to be mainly on the position of France in relation to the three Allies.

(a) Z1624/514/17. (b) Z2102, 2267/514/17. (c) Z3116'13/17. (d) Z1815/514/17.

of the Anglo-Soviet and Franco-Soviet treaties in advance of such comprehensive discussions. After mentioning French *desiderata* in the Levant,¹ M. Bidault said that the French wanted an exclusive zone in the Rhineland as far north as Cologne. The rest of the Rhineland should be under international control. France did not wish to annex any part of Germany. Mr. Eden said that he was surprised at the extent of the zone which was to be exclusively French; he suggested that the French would be wiser to trust to international controls. Nothing was said to M. Bidault about the discussions at Yalta on the dismemberment of Germany.

In view of the French insistence upon a general agreement before concluding a treaty with Great Britain, no progress was made during the next few weeks. The Foreign Office was also concentrating on the preparations for the San Francisco Conference. On April 5, however, General de Gaulle asked Mr. Duff Cooper to call on him. During (a) their conversation Mr. Duff Cooper mentioned to General de Gaulle the question of an Anglo-French pact. General de Gaulle said that he wanted a pact, but that it should be something more than the Anglo-Soviet or Franco-Soviet treaties. He aimed at an alliance in which all outstanding questions between France and England should be settled.

Mr. Duff Cooper pointed out that there were only two questions—the Levant and the Rhine. General de Gaulle said that the French wanted to occupy the Rhine as far north as Cologne. He was prepared to share the northern portion of the Zone with the Belgians, and expected a British occupation—with the help of the Belgians and Dutch—of the remaining area of the Rhineland. He had no wish to annex to France the territory between the Rhine and the existing French frontier. He did not intend to try to make Frenchmen out of the Rhinelanders, but the time might come when the latter would prefer to form part of a prosperous and strong France rather than a chaotic and ruined Germany. Mr. Duff Cooper thought that, although General de Gaulle did not say so, he was conscious of a new menace from the east against which it was necessary for the two Great Powers of Western Europe to stand together. He told Mr. Duff Cooper that his main reason for supporting a world organization was that it committed the United States to take part in European affairs.

Later on April 5 Mr. Duff Cooper saw M. Chauvel. M. Chauvel (b) said that he and M. Bidault had found General de Gaulle even more

¹ For M. Bidault's statement on the Syrian question, see Volume IV, Chapter LV.

(a) Z4378/13/17. (b) Z4377/13/17.

favourable to an Anglo-French agreement after his conversation with Mr. Duff Cooper. M. Chauvel thought that the negotiations could be settled in a week. Mr. Duff Cooper said that the question of the Rhine would require consultation with the United States and Russia, but M. Chauvel suggested that if there were Anglo-Russian agreement on general principles, the details could be settled later. He thought of coming over to London to discuss matters.

- Mr. Duff Cooper considered M. Chauvel 'a little over-excited by having found de Gaulle in such a favourable mood for once'. On the other hand the opportunity ought not to be missed. Mr. Duff Cooper had therefore asked whether M. Bidault could give him definite French proposals. On April 6 M. Bidault confirmed M.
- (a) Chauvel's statements. He said definitely that the French Government was most anxious to secure a pact, treaty, or alliance with Great Britain and that an exchange of letters would be a sufficient way of dealing with the questions of the Rhine and the Levant. He agreed that the French had been slow in putting forward proposals, and hoped that we should not feel that we were now being 'hustled'.
- (b) The Prime Minister did not share Mr. Duff Cooper's view. In a long minute to Mr. Eden he asked why Mr. Duff Cooper should have mentioned to General de Gaulle the possibility of an Anglo-French pact when we had decided not to raise the matter for the time. He wrote:

'It crosses my mind that de Gaulle rushed precipitously into the arms of Russia, and has been, for the last two years, ready to play Russia off against Great Britain, but that after making an alliance with them he was somewhat disappointed with the result. In trying to sell us across the counter he has been rebuffed and he now talks of the "new menace".'

The Prime Minister thought that Mr. Duff Cooper was acting in a manner contrary to the policy agreed by the War Cabinet.

'Why on earth can he not remain passive and be wooed, instead of always playing into de Gaulle's hands and leaving him the giver of favours when he has none to give? . . . Why can you not give him [Mr. Duff Cooper] clear instructions that he is not to press for any engagements with France? When France comes, as she will do in due course, and stronger than she is now, all these matters can be raised and settled in an agreeable manner. . . . We are in no hurry about any Anglo-French agreement. If we offer it, we shall be snubbed and blackmailed. If we wait, it will be a happy and permanent union.'

(a) Z4376/13/17. (b) Z4610/13/17.

The Prime Minister was 'absolutely' opposed to an attempt to make an 'all-in agreement' within a week. 'It is a great mistake always to want to do things. Very often they will do themselves much better than anyone could do them.'

Mr. Eden replied to the Prime Minister on April 7 that he thought M. Massigli rather than Mr. Duff Cooper responsible for the initiative, but that Mr. Duff Cooper seemed to have been more forthcoming than was necessary. The position was, however, that the French had in fact made an advance to us with a proposal for a 'pact, treaty, or alliance'. Mr. Eden considered that we ought to show our willingness to examine the proposal. 'General de Gaulle is not a permanency, but France, we hope, will be, and we want to build her up. She will be the stronger for an alliance with us and our authority with her will be the greater.' An overwhelming majority in France was favourable to an alliance. The Russians might not like it, but 'in the light of their present behaviour . . . it will do them good to see Anglo-French relations brought closer'. Mr. Eden therefore wanted to tell M. Chauvel that we should be 'ready to hear what he has got to say'. The Prime Minister was not (a) convinced. He sent another minute to Mr. Eden on April 8 that we ought not to 'make any *démarche* to France at this juncture, and above all not try to make any arrangement before the world fair at San Francisco or the immense events impending in Europe'. The questions outstanding with France—especially that of the French zone of occupation—could be settled by ordinary diplomatic machinery; there was no need of a special mission.

Mr. Eden replied on the same day that the *démarche* came from the French, and that he did not wish to snub them. There was no harm in allowing M. Chauvel to come to London and to make his proposals. Mr. Eden hoped that the Prime Minister would change his mind. After conversation with Mr. Eden the Prime Minister agreed to M. Chauvel's visit. Mr. Eden therefore telegraphed to Mr. Duff Cooper on April 10 that he would be glad to receive M. Chauvel, but that, since he was leaving in a week's time for San Francisco, and was fully engaged in talks with the Dominion representatives, it would be 'physically impossible' to go beyond a 'preliminary exchange of views'.

The Foreign Office indeed were uncertain whether the French (b) had given up their insistence on agreement over the Levant and the Rhineland before the conclusion of a treaty. If they still insisted on bringing in these questions, we could not decide anything within

(a) Z4611/13/17. (b) Z4612/13/17.

a week. We could not settle the Rhineland question on an Anglo-French basis; if we came to an understanding—at any rate in writing—with the French over the Levant, without consulting the States concerned, the whole Arab world would assume that we had ‘sold’ the States to the French. On the other hand, if the French were content with a short and simple agreement we could sign a treaty at once. Otherwise we might aim at a joint public declaration affirming the intention of the two Governments to conclude a treaty.

- (a) M. Chauvel told Mr. Holman on April 11 that he hoped to come to London on the following day. It appeared, however, that M. Bidault and M. Chauvel had gone further than General de Gaulle had intended, and that he was not willing to allow M. Chauvel’s visit. Mr. Duff Cooper told General de Gaulle later that his refusal
- (b) to allow M. Chauvel to come to London had caused an unfavourable impression. The Prime Minister indeed had regarded it as a deliberate
- (c) slight upon the Western Allies. He telegraphed to Mr. Duff Cooper on the night of April 30–May 1 that General de Gaulle was ‘the greatest obstacle the Allies have to face in making good relations between France and the Western democracies’.

- For the next few months the question of a treaty remained in suspense. At the end of May General de Gaulle’s behaviour after the crisis over the Levant States became almost preposterously
- (d) anti-British.¹ Sir A. Cadogan—with characteristic fairness—noted on June 26 that he suspected ‘some of the difficulties’ with the General to be ‘partly, at least, of our own making’, but the Prime
 - (e) Minister was particularly annoyed at General de Gaulle’s refusal to invite Air Chief Marshal Tedder and General Morgan, when on a visit with General Eisenhower to Paris as members of S.H.A.E.F., to a dinner given in honour of General Eisenhower.² General de Gaulle even went as far as to refuse to allow a number of French officers to attend a ceremony at the British Embassy on June 20 at which they were to receive British decorations. He also cancelled an invitation to British officers of the Twenty-First Army Group to receive French decorations on June 18.³

¹ See Volume IV, Chapter LV.

² It is uncertain whether, in fact, General Morgan went to Paris with General Eisenhower.

³ The Prime Minister’s comment on this latter act of discourtesy was as follows: ‘As to the patriotic ceremonies of June 18, I agree that they should be of a peculiarly French character and that it would be extremely bad taste for any British officers of the 21st Army Group to be present on the occasion when memories of the great French victory at Mont St. Jean would doubtless be in all minds.’

(a) Z4613/13/17. (b) Z5274, 5427/13/17. (c) T706/5 (Z5584/13/17; Churchill Papers/173). (d) Z7882/13/17. (e) Z7531/13/17.

After the failure of their attempt to get M. Bidault to come to London for a discussion of the Syrian problem¹ Mr. Eden had no opportunity of talking over with him—as he had intended—the question of a treaty. The Foreign Office, however, were still anxious to bring about an Anglo-French alliance. They realised that it would hardly be possible to do so while General de Gaulle was in power, but they hoped for a change after the French elections in October or November 1945. Until these elections had taken place there was no likely substitute for General de Gaulle and also no proper representative assembly in which public opinion could make itself felt and which could exercise effective pressure on the Government. We had therefore in our own interests to reconcile ourselves to carry on as best we could for the next few months. Meanwhile we knew that the General's anti-British policy was not popular in France generally, and was strongly opposed in his own Government. We should take care not to alienate French public opinion, but rather to do all we could to convince this opinion and the French Government that we were not trying—as General de Gaulle persistently believed—to substitute British for French influence in the Levant.²

¹ See Volume IV, Chapter LV.

² Mr. Bevin discussed the whole question of policy towards France at a meeting in the Foreign Office on August 13, 1945. He said that his long-term policy was to establish close relations between Great Britain and the countries on the Mediterranean and Atlantic fringes of Europe, and, more especially, Greece, Italy, France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Scandinavia. He wanted close economic and political association with these countries, and thought it necessary to make a start with France. He proposed to try to reach some agreement over the Levant, but did not wish to take any active steps towards the conclusion of an Anglo-French alliance or the formation of a western group until he had had more time to consider possible Russian reactions. (a)

(a) Z9595/13/17.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

Anglo-Russian relations, January–October 1944

(i)

The enigma of Russian policy: the Pravda incident of January, 1944.

The Russians could regard the Teheran Conference as a success, since they had now gained their main objective—a definite promise of an invasion of France by a definite date, and the concentration of Anglo-American resources on this invasion. In return they had made no concessions to their Allies other than a pledge, which was much in their own interest, to take part in the war against Japan after the defeat of Germany. They had left themselves free in Europe to enforce upon the Poles territorial and political conditions which would ensure their subservience to the Soviet Union. The strategic concentration of Allied forces in the west also meant that the Russians were likely to have the Balkans—though not Greece—under their direct control after the retreat of the Germans. In other words, the Russians would be able to impose their own pattern in south-east Europe as in Poland without interference from their Allies as long as they took care not to alarm them unduly about the ‘steam-roller’ character of Russian policy. In January 1944, the Russian armies reached the Polish eastern frontier of August 1939. By the end of March they had crossed the pre-1940 Roumanian frontier. In mid-April they had reoccupied practically all the territory which had formed part of the Soviet Union before the outbreak of war in 1939. Although in areas with which they were not directly concerned they had advocated, and continued to advocate the claims of ‘Partisans’ to keep their arms and even to form governments, they soon dispersed and disarmed the ‘Partisans’ in their own areas. On the other hand they tried to reassure the western Powers that they were sincere in their previous opposition to exclusive spheres of influence in enemy territory in Europe and that they were ready to carry out an agreed policy in the countries which would soon fall within Soviet occupation.

Thus, early in April 1944, M. Molotov stated that the Soviet Government did not want either to annex any Roumanian territory or to change the existing social order in Roumania. On April 30 the Soviet Government announced an agreement with the Czechoslovak Government defining the position of the Red Army Command on

Czechoslovak territory. The terms of the agreement were communicated to the British Government by way of consultation, but were published without waiting for the British reply. Nevertheless the agreement itself seemed reasonable and allowed considerable powers to the delegate of the Czechoslovak Government.¹ The Soviet Government also explained that, on the question of land reform in Poland and Yugoslavia, they favoured the distribution of land to individual peasants rather than collectivisation. They accepted a satisfactory civil affairs agreement with Norway, and agreed to take part in the international monetary conference at Bretton Woods. They also seemed more willing at least to cease from obstructing Anglo-American attempts to solve the economic difficulties of Iran. (a)

In a speech of November 6, 1944—the anniversary of the revolution—Stalin once more spoke of Allied solidarity. He said that differences between the great Allies were surprisingly few, and that, after all, such differences occurred even between members of the same party. Some observers took this comment to mean that not all Stalin's advisers were equally sure of the advantages of co-operation with the Western Powers. In any case it was inevitable that these Powers should continue to feel disturbed and doubtful about the future. The British Government sincerely wanted Anglo-Russian co-operation to continue after the war; without such co-operation the result of the war would be merely to substitute one danger for another, and, at all events for the European Powers, Russian collaboration was an essential element in plans for a lasting peace and rapid economic recovery. The British Government therefore were willing to go a very long way in concessions to Soviet demands. Their general policy was to assume that the alliance would continue after the war, and to act accordingly. They could hardly do otherwise. Even if they had doubts of Soviet goodwill, they could not assume that a break with the U.S.S.R. was inevitable; if it were not inevitable, the only sensible policy was to act, as far as vital British interests and obligations allowed, as though the Russians were not less anxious for collaboration.

Hence, in addition to the treatment of detailed questions as they arose, the Foreign Office documents of the period show a continual attempt to interpret Russian policy, assess the real intentions of Stalin and the small governing oligarchy of the U.S.S.R. and estimate the possibilities of agreement. The Foreign Office were willing to make allowances for Russian methods, which seemed in British eyes clumsy and ill-mannered, and also for the persistence of Russian

¹ This delegate, appointed by the Czechoslovak Government, had the duty of setting up an administration, organising the Czechoslovak armed forces, and ensuring co-operation with the Soviet Commander-in-Chief.

(a) U3793/2152/74.

suspensions. The difficulty was to know how far the suspicions would affect Russian policy, or indeed whether they really existed or were displayed merely to hide a realist and 'imperialist' policy intended to secure for the U.S.S.R. the future domination of Europe.

- (a) An unpleasant example of Russian methods came very soon after the Teheran Conference when *Pravda* published on January 17, 1944, a fantastic story—from its Cairo correspondent—to the effect that, according to 'reports from Greek and Yugoslav sources which deserve confidence', a secret meeting had recently taken place at a 'coastal town' in the 'Pyrenean Peninsula' between 'two leading English figures and Ribbentrop. The purpose of the meeting was to set out the conditions of a separate peace with Germany. It is thought that the meeting did not remain without results.'

Mr. Balfour, Chargé d'Affaires at Moscow in Sir A. Clark Kerr's absence, protested at once to the Soviet Government against the publication of a false report of this kind.¹ The Foreign Office also instructed Mr. Balfour to inform the Soviet Government that we had issued an immediate denial of the report in order to prevent further mischief, and to ask them to publish a denial in the Soviet press. They did in fact issue a *démenti* on January 19, but the value of it was reduced by the simultaneous publication in Moscow of a Tass message from London quoting a report in the *Sunday Times* regarding German peace proposals made through Turkish channels.

Mr. Balfour reported that the publication of the Cairo story was interpreted in some foreign circles in Moscow as a deliberate move by the Soviet authorities to remind public opinion abroad that they were not to be trifled with in such matters as their attitude towards the Polish question and the date of the opening of a second front. Mr. Balfour thought it likely that the story had been given publicity for some mischievous motive. The Foreign Office also had evidence—including a statement by the Soviet Press Attaché to a member of the British Embassy at Chungking—that the Soviet Government had sent out special instructions that the report should receive wide publicity. Finally, it was established that *Pravda* had no correspondent in Cairo.

The Foreign Office therefore instructed Mr. Balfour to inform the

¹ The rumour—for which there was not the slightest foundation—had been circulating for some weeks. Lord Beaverbrook suggested to the Prime Minister that the *Pravda* story was an exaggerated retaliation for reports in the British press about an alleged German peace offer to Russia. This suggestion is, however, improbable. The reports to which Lord Beaverbrook referred were, apparently, in an article of January 15, 1944, in the *Sunday Times*. It is unlikely that, if the *Pravda* report had been in retaliation for them, it would have appeared as early as January 17. See M. Mourin, *Les tentatives de paix dans la seconde guerre mondiale* (Paris, 1949), 188–9.

(a) N442, 451/442/38. (b) N668/442/38.

Soviet Government that, as the story had had world-wide repercussions embarrassing both to the British and Soviet Governments, we should be glad to know how this damaging and dangerous fabrication was passed by the censor and published in an official organ of the Communist party. The Soviet Government were aware that we let them know of all 'peace-feelers', and that the report could have had no foundation. Mr. Balfour was therefore told to ask frankly in the spirit of the Moscow and Teheran Conferences whether the Soviet Government had any reason for allowing the publication of the report.

Mr. Balfour carried out his instructions in a note to the Soviet (a) Government on January 21. The Soviet Government's reply was that *Pravda* had the right to publish reports from correspondents who enjoyed the confidence of the editorial staff. M. Molotov, whom Mr. Balfour saw later, denied that the Soviet Government had instructed its representatives abroad to give wide publicity to the story. He said that *Pravda* was a mere organ of the party, and implied that it was of little account compared with *Izvestia* which was 'the only mouth-piece of officialdom'.

The Prime Minister himself sent a long telegram to Stalin on (b) January 24. Mr. Churchill said that Sir. A. Clark Kerr was returning to Moscow at once to explain a series of difficulties with the Soviet Government which appeared trifling but might become an embarrassment to both parties. Mr. Churchill continued:

'I have been much impressed and also surprised by the extraordinary bad effects produced here by the *Pravda* story to which so much official publicity was given by the Soviet Government. Even the best friends of Soviet Russia in England have been bewildered. What makes it so injurious is that we cannot understand it. I am sure you know that I would never negotiate with the Germans separately and that we tell you every overture they make as you have told us. We never thought of making a separate peace even in the years when we were all alone and could easily have made one without serious loss to the British Empire and largely at your expense. Why should we think of it now when our triple fortunes are marching forward to victory? If anything has occurred or been printed in the English newspapers annoying to you, why can you not send me a telegram or make your Ambassador come round and see us about it? In this way all the harm that has been done and suspicions that have been aroused could be avoided.

I get every day long extracts from *War and the Working Classes* which seem to make continuous Left-Wing attacks on our administration in Italy and politics in Greece. Considering that you have a representative on the Commission for Italy, we should hope that these complaints would be ventilated there and we should hear about them and

(a) N1021, 525/442/38. (b) T130A/4, Churchill Papers/396.

explain our point of view between Governments. As these attacks are made in public in the Soviet newspapers which on foreign affairs are believed rightly or wrongly not to diverge from the policy of the Soviet Union, the divergence between our Governments becomes a serious Parliamentary issue.'

Mr. Churchill referred to the good relations established at the Teheran Conference. He said that he was continually trying to 'make things go the way you wish them and the way our triple interests require', and that his work was rendered more difficult by the 'pin-pricking' to which he had referred. A few words from Stalin would 'blow the whole thing out of the water'.

- (a) Stalin sent on January 29 a somewhat argumentative but not unfriendly reply in the following terms:

'As regards the *Pravda* report, undue importance should not be attached to it as there is no ground to contest the right of a newspaper to publish reports of rumours received from trustworthy newspaper correspondents. We Russians at least never laid claim to interference of such kind in the affairs of the British Press although we have had and still have incomparably more serious cause to do so. Our Tass Agency deny only a very small proportion of the reports meriting a *démenti* from what is published in the English newspapers.

If we must come to the essence of the question, I cannot agree with you that England could at one time easily have concluded a separate peace with Germany largely at the expense of the U.S.S.R. and without serious loss to the British Empire. It seems to me that this was said in the heat of the moment like statements of yours of another character which I remember. I remember for instance how, in the difficult times for England until the Soviet Union joined in the war with Germany, you admitted the possibility of the British Government having to move over to Canada and carry on the struggle against Germany from across the ocean. On the other hand you acknowledge that it was precisely the Soviet Union which having developed its struggle with Hitler removed the danger which undoubtedly threatened Great Britain from Germany. If nevertheless we admit that England could have managed without the U.S.S.R., then surely it was no less possible to say the same of the Soviet Union. I do not like talking about all this, but I am compelled to have my say and to remind you of the facts.

About the journal *War and the Working Class*, I can only say that it is a Trades Union journal and that the Government cannot accept responsibility for articles appearing in it. Furthermore the journal like our other journals is true to a fundamental principle—the strengthening of friendship with the Allies—which does not exclude but rather presupposes friendly criticism.'

(a) T179/4, Churchill Papers/396.

The message ended with a reference to the 'pleasant impressions' left by the Teheran meetings, and with a promise to see Sir A. Clark Kerr. The Prime Minister thought of replying that he agreed that it would be better to leave the past to history, 'but remember if I live long enough I may be one of the historians'. Mr. Eden, however, doubted whether the Russians would take this comment well, and the Prime Minister decided not to send an answer.

Sir A. Clark Kerr reported on February 13 that during the last (a) few days he had had talks with MM. Litvinov, Maisky and Dekanosov.¹ They had expressed complete satisfaction with the existing state of Anglo-Russian relations and said that there had been nothing to disturb the goodwill and confidence established at the Moscow and Teheran Conferences. MM. Maisky and Dekanosov said that only a postponement of the date fixed for our invasion of Europe could destroy this confidence.² Sir A. Clark Kerr had thought it better—in view of Stalin's reply to the Prime Minister—not to revert to the *Pravda* message in conversation with Stalin or M. Molotov; both M. Maisky and M. Litvinov had tried to make light of the matter. M. Maisky agreed that the Soviet Government would 'like to see the whole thing forgotten'.

Mr. Eden was at this time perhaps more disturbed than some of his own staff about the attitude of the Russians. On April 3, 1944 he noted, on a long minute from the Northern Department putting (b) forward the least unfavourable view of Russian lack of co-operation, that he would 'dearly like to accept' such a summing-up because he 'shared entirely [the] valuation of Anglo-Soviet understanding' as essential to our policy. He added: 'but I confess to growing apprehension that Russia has vast aims, and that these may include the domination of Eastern Europe and even the Mediterranean and the "communising" of much that remains'. Mr. Eden thought Russian policy towards Italy could be explained as 'a calculated attempt to smash up all left parties and centre parties in the interest of the communists'.

The context of Mr. Eden's note was a telegram from Lord Halifax reporting Mr. Hull's feeling that 'the tide of Moscow and Teheran had ebbed', and that the only remedy was to try to establish closer relations between the Prime Minister, the President and Stalin.³ Mr.

¹ Assistant Commissar for Foreign Affairs.

² Sir A. Clark Kerr reported on March 1 that there was 'some recrudescence' of (c) 'second front talk'.

³ The State Department was at this time much worried over the hostility shown by the Russians to the American advisers to the Iranian Government. See Volume IV, Chapter LVIII, section (i).

(a) N937/36/38. (b) N1908/36/38. (c) N1341/36/38.

Hull inclined to favour 'a very plain-speaking approach by the other two to Stalin, pointing out to him where we should get to if he went on taking one-sided action'.

- (a) The Prime Minister also read Lord Halifax's telegram. He agreed with Mr. Hull's plan, and thought that meanwhile we should 're-lapse into a moody silence so far as Stalin is concerned'. The Prime Minister would send no more personal telegrams, and Sir A. Clark Kerr should not ask for interviews. We should not argue at this stage with the Russians, but give them simple answers to questions they might put to us. Mr. Churchill said that he was 'anxious to save as many Poles as possible from being murdered'. Argument with the Russians merely made them angry, but events would soon compel them to come to us with questions, to which we should be in no hurry to reply. The Russians would take every advantage of their position, and—after our Continental landing—would be able to blackmail us by refusing to advance beyond a certain point or even giving the Germans a hint that they could move more troops to the west.

Mr. Churchill wrote that, although he had tried in every way to put himself in sympathy with the Communist leaders, he could not feel the slightest confidence in them. 'Force and facts are their only realities.' At present they were expecting us to flatter and 'kowtow' to them; they would be disagreeably surprised if we refused to do so. Mr. Churchill explained that he had 'not the slightest wish to go back on our desire to establish friendly relationships with Russia', but that 'our and especially my very courteous and even effusive personal approaches have had a bad effect'.

Mr. Eden took a more optimistic line in his reply to the Prime Minister's minute. He agreed that we should discontinue for a time any personal messages. On the other hand he thought that Mr. Hull's suggestion would lead only to further argument, and that we should not conclude definitely that the Russians had decided upon a policy of non-co-operation. Mr. Eden thought that we should 'let matters drift a little longer before considering a showdown with Stalin'.

Note to section (i) Foreign Office memorandum on Anglo-Russian relations.

- The case for not regarding the Russian attitude as definite evidence of an intention to refuse co-operation after the war was put—at a departmental level—by Mr. G. M. Wilson, a temporary member of
- (b) the Northern Department, in a long note written during April and revised in May 1944.¹ This note began with a reference to a comment in a despatch by Sir A. Clark Kerr that Russia had 'too recently

¹ The head of the Northern Department at this time had no personal knowledge of the U.S.S.R. and was inclined to submit, without comment, memoranda written by junior members of his staff.

(a) N2128/36/38. (b) N3554/36/38.

emerged from a period when she was treated by other nations as a pariah unfit for civilised intercourse to feel wholly satisfied about the readiness of her allies to cultivate permanent relations with her as an honourable equal'. The Soviet Government had also become so much accustomed to intriguing against the stability of other states that they would be slow to give up the belief that important elements in Great Britain and the United States were plotting against them or at least planning to treat Germany lightly after the war.

Mr. Wilson thought that Americans, particularly in military circles, were saying that their army would be useful in time to fight the Russians. British officers, especially in the Middle East, hardly concealed their hostility, and, until recently, members of the British Military Mission in Moscow had done little to hide their contempt of and dislike for the Russians. This talk certainly went back to the Russians, and was exaggerated by them. They regarded Polish propaganda as aiming at poisoning Anglo-American-Soviet relations, and considered that it would not be tolerated unless it served some British-American purpose. They probably believed that, even though our declared policy was different, we—or important sections of opinion—might be trying to save Germany from destruction and to unite Europe in an anti-Bolshevik crusade. After their experiences in 1812, 1914, and the present war, the 'fear of a united Europe rather than a desire to dominate must be the major influence in [Russia's] attitude towards Europe, and she is therefore probably prepared to go to almost any lengths to prevent the same thing happening again, possibly in an even more dangerous form'.

The Russians suspected the working of the machinery of the Combined Chiefs of Staff, with the joint command in the Mediterranean and European theatres. These arrangements led to a good deal of Anglo-American discussion and action on political questions from which the Russians thought themselves excluded. It would seem, however, that this suspicious misinterpretation of Anglo-American policy was not universal, and was not necessarily the view of Stalin himself. Our major task was therefore to strengthen the position of those who believed tripartite co-operation to be possible. In so doing we must expect Russian suspicions to continue for a long time, and must remember that the Russians had no use for diplomatic forms, and thought it 'more important to be explicit than polite'. In fact, our collaboration with the Russians was better than it had been a year ago, and might well improve if we combined insistence on our own vital interests with a punctilious regard for our obligations to the Soviet Union. They would never be satisfied until the preliminary discussions on major political questions were on a three-Power basis, and we did not merely ask their approval at a final stage. We ought also to shut down 'irresponsible anti-Soviet chatter' in the Services and take more care about the selection of personnel whose work would bring them into constant contact with Russians in the U.S.S.R. and elsewhere.

Mr. Wilson's memorandum was given favourable comment by

Mr. Jebb. Sir O. Sargent initialled it without comment. Sir A. Cadogan wrote that Mr. Wilson had written 'a very good paper'. He minuted that it was very difficult in practice to secure the constant collaboration which Mr. Wilson wanted since, below the highest level, the Russians had not the personnel capable or bold enough to take responsibility with whom we could talk. 'The P.M. and the President cannot constantly travel all the way to Teheran, beyond which Stalin refuses to venture. The E.A.C. is the ultimate result of proposals we made for a central body where intimate contact could be maintained. But I'm afraid it hasn't quite worked out that way.'

Mr. Eden also considered Mr. Wilson's paper a good one; he thought at first of sending a copy to the Prime Minister, but decided on June 7 'in present circumstances' not to do so.

(ii)

The question of the Baltic States: Mr. Eden's minute of January 25, 1944, to the Prime Minister.

- (a) On January 16, 1944, the Prime Minister wrote a minute to Mr. Eden on the question of the Baltic States. He mentioned the very strong line which he had taken at the beginning of 1942 against a British commitment in favour of the absorption of those States by Russia at that time. He also referred to a minute which he had written on October 6, 1943, i.e. before the Moscow and Teheran Conferences. He had then thought that, in view of the division of opinion in the House of Commons, and of the United States elections, it was still necessary to reserve territorial questions for general settlement at the Peace Conference, i.e. to maintain our policy of 1942.

The Prime Minister now asked whether the position had changed. He said that during the past two years his own feelings had altered. The great victories of the Russian armies, the deep-seated changes in the character of the Russian State and Government, and our new confidence with regard to Stalin must affect our views. Above all there was the fact that the Russians would soon be in physical possession of the territories of the Baltic States. It was certain that we should never attempt to turn them out. Moreover, when Stalin, at the Teheran Conference, had spoken of keeping East Prussia as far as Königsberg, we had said nothing about the Baltic States, although any such plan would clearly include them in the Russian dominions.

We were now about to attempt the settlement of the eastern frontiers of Poland. We could not ignore the fact that the Russian victories had largely settled the question of the Baltic States, the Bukovina and Bessarabia. At the same time a pronouncement on the subject might have disastrous effects in the United States during an

(a) N665/506/59.

election year, and there was no doubt that we ourselves would be subject to embarrassing attack in the House of Commons if we decided the fate of these territories. The Prime Minister therefore asked for a note on the whole question of the Russian western frontier. He thought that the Russian claims did not go beyond the former Tsarist boundaries, and that in some areas they fell notably short of these boundaries.

The Prime Minister wanted to discuss the question with Mr. Eden and Sir A. Cadogan, and then to bring it before the War Cabinet, not so much with a view to action as to deciding upon the attitude which we should take. The Prime Minister still considered that it would be better to postpone any decisions until after the defeat of Hitler, but this policy might not be possible, and the negotiations about Poland might involve, directly or indirectly, the other territorial questions. Finally, the Prime Minister referred to the 'extraordinary difficulty of the subject'. On January 18 Mr. Churchill suggested that the War Cabinet should have a discussion (a) in the near future about the Baltic States. He did not propose making a public statement on the matter, but thought that our hands might easily be forced. He repeated that his own views had changed considerably.

Mr. Eden replied to Mr. Churchill in a long minute of January 25 (b) dealing with the Russian western frontier except with regard to Poland.¹ He said that the Russo-Finnish frontier established in 1920 was identical with the nineteenth-century frontier except for the cession to Finland of Petsamo and the western half of the Ribachi peninsula. This frontier was altered to the Russian advantage in 1940. The Russians since that time had maintained that they wanted only the restoration of the 1940 frontier, though at Teheran Stalin had said that they might wish to have Petsamo in place of their thirty years' lease of Hangö. We had interests in the nickel mines at Petsamo, but no interest in Hangö. We would therefore slightly prefer the Russians to keep Hangö rather than Petsamo.

Bessarabia had been Russian² until 1918, and had then voted for union with Roumania on conditions that it should retain provincial autonomy and a local Diet. We had recognised the union in 1920. Northern Bukovina had never been part of Russia. The U.S.S.R. recovered Bessarabia and acquired Northern Bukovina in June 1940; there was no indication that they wanted to do more than re-establish the frontier as it was after June 1940. They had also said that they wanted treaties of alliance or mutual assistance guaranteeing

¹ For the question of the Russo-Polish frontier, see below, Chapters XXXIX and XL.

² Since 1812. A part of it was lost after the Crimean War and recovered in 1878.

(a) WM(44)8; N506/506/59. (b) N665/506/59.

the independence of Finland and Roumania and giving them the right to establish bases in the two countries. The Baltic States proclaimed their independence of Russia after the collapse of 1917. The Russians recognised their independence in 1920, but now claimed that in the summer of 1940 these States voted themselves into the Soviet Union. There was not the smallest chance of the Russians abandoning any part of this claim. When M. Molotov was in England in 1942, we had said that we were willing to sign a treaty which, it was agreed, constituted recognition by us of the Soviet claim. The draft treaty was not signed, but was superseded by the twenty years' treaty of alliance in which nothing was said about frontiers. We were, however, committed on the point in the records of the discussions. The Russians appeared to be satisfied, since they had not raised the matter since 1942, and there seemed no reason why they should do so in connexion with the negotiations about Poland.

Neither the Russians nor the Germans had endeared themselves to the populations of the Baltic countries. It was not strictly true to say—as the Russians maintained—that the Baltic States had voted themselves into the U.S.S.R. There were no plebiscites on the issue, but elections were held in 1940. These elections resulted in overwhelmingly pro-Soviet majorities in the parliaments of the three countries which then voted the countries into republics of the U.S.S.R. with the same status as the Ukraine, the Caucasian Republics, etc. The elections were held while Soviet troops were in occupation of the countries, and in nearly all the constituencies there was only one candidate. The exact numbers were not known, but a large number of people were deported into the interior of the Soviet Union, and there was a large-scale nationalisation of industry and land, though not as drastic as in the U.S.S.R.

On their occupation of the Baltic countries in 1941 the Germans centralised the administration of the whole area (including White Russia) in a Reichscommissariat for the Ostland, with local committees for each of the three countries concerned. Popular support for the Germans diminished as it became obvious that they were not intending to grant any kind of local autonomy, and as the conscription of the population, deportation to forced labour in Germany, and the requisitioning of grain were enforced more and more stringently. Recently the Germans had talked a certain amount about autonomy for Estonia and Latvia, but as they had made themselves thoroughly disliked the talk was not very convincing. In general the Germans had used the Baltic States unscrupulously as a source of manpower and supplies for their war against the Soviet Union without regard to the feelings or wishes of the inhabitants.

Mr. Eden thought that we should agree to all the Russian claims. The frontiers for which the Russians were asking fell short of those of 1914 in that the whole of Finland and most of Poland had been part of Imperial Russia. In the case of the Baltic States we should maintain our decision not to give formal or public recognition of their absorption into the U.S.S.R. before the peace settlement; otherwise we should certainly be accused of violating the Atlantic Charter and should have difficulties with the Americans. No one was likely to trouble about the Roumanian frontier, especially since Bessarabia was Russian territory before 1918. In the case of Finland the U.S.S.R. was merely recovering territory ceded to her by the Finnish Government in 1940.

Mr. Eden suggested that we should prepare the Russians as to the line we were intending to take in public before their nearer approach to the territories in question aroused public attention. Otherwise we might have an explosion from Moscow, or at least in the Soviet press. We could assure Stalin that we did not intend to dispute the Soviet claims, and we could explain our difficulties and warn him in advance that we should go on saying that all these claims were for final settlement at the Peace Conference.

The Prime Minister took no action on this minute from Mr. Eden. The Northern Department of the Foreign Office enquired in July (a) 1944, whether any assurance was to be given to Stalin, but the general view—with which Mr. Eden agreed—was that there was no awkward public comment on the Russian approach to the territories and that it would be better to make no move in the matter.

(iii)

The Prime Minister's proposal for a temporary division of spheres of action in the Balkans: American objections to the Prime Minister's plan: Foreign Office memorandum of June 7, 1944, on Russian intentions in the Balkans: discussion in the War Cabinet on June 13, 1944: correspondence between the Prime Minister, President Roosevelt and Stalin (May 4–July 15, 1944).

On May 4 the Prime Minister asked Mr. Eden for a short paper (b) on 'the brute issues between us and the Soviet Government which are developing in Italy, in Roumania, in Bulgaria, in Yugoslavia, and above all in Greece . . .'.

'Broadly speaking the issue is: are we going to acquiesce in the Communisation of the Balkans and perhaps of Italy? I am of opinion on the whole that we ought to come to a definite conclusion about it,

(a) N4537/183/38. (b) R7380/68/67.

and that if our conclusion is that we resist the Communist infusion and invasion we should put it to them pretty plainly at the best moment that military events permit. We should of course have to consult the United States first.'

Later on the same day the Prime Minister wrote: 'Evidently we are approaching a showdown with the Russians about their Communist intrigues in Italy, Yugoslavia, and Greece. I think their attitude becomes more difficult every day.'¹

- (a) Meanwhile on May 5, 1944, in a conversation with M. Gusev about Greece and Roumania, Mr. Eden had explained that we had always made our view clear that the Soviet Government should take the lead in an attempt to get Roumania out of the war. On the other hand we should like a public statement of Russian support for M. Papandreou in Greece, or at least a message urging the E.A.M. representatives to join the Greek Government.² Greece was in the British theatre of command, and we felt entitled to ask for Soviet support for our policy there in return for the support we were giving to Soviet policy with regard to Roumania.
- (b) M. Gusev told Mr. Eden on May 18 that the Soviet Government agreed with this suggestion, but wanted to know whether we had consulted the Americans. Mr. Eden said that we had not consulted them, but had no doubt about their agreement. Lord Halifax was therefore instructed to ask the State Department whether they would agree to our telling the Russians that they agreed with the proposal that we should take the lead in Greece, and the Russians in Roumania. We were basing this proposal on 'military realities'; it would not affect the rights and responsibilities of the three Powers at the peace settlement and afterwards. We were not 'carving up' the Balkans into spheres of influence, still less excluding the United States Government from the formulation or execution of Allied policy there.
- (c) Lord Halifax mentioned the proposal to Mr. Hull on May 30, but did not say that Mr. Eden had already spoken to the Russians. Mr. Hull promised to be helpful, but was clearly nervous about any plan which had the appearance of establishing spheres of influence.
- (d) The Prime Minister decided to send a personal message on the question to President Roosevelt. In this message (of May 31) he said that there had recently been 'disquieting signs of a possible divergence of policy between ourselves and the Russians in regard to the Balkan countries, and in particular towards Greece'. He then

¹ Mr. Eden replied on May 9 that he had already given instructions for such a paper to be drawn up. The memorandum was submitted on June 7. See below, p. 119-21.

² See below, Chapter XLIII, section (iii).

(a) R7214/9/19. (b) R7903/68 67. (c) R8514 9/19. (d) T1161/4, No. 687 (Churchill Papers, 66; R8543 9. 19).

mentioned the British proposal to the Russians with regard to Roumania and Greece. He explained that we did not wish

‘to carve up the Balkans into spheres of influence, and in agreeing to the arrangement we should make it clear that it applied only to war conditions and did not affect the rights and responsibilities which each of the Great Powers will have to exercise at the peace settlement and afterwards in regard to the whole of Europe. The arrangement would of course involve no change in the present collaboration between you and us in the formulation and execution of Allied policy towards those countries. We feel, however, that the arrangement now proposed would be a useful device for preventing any divergence of policy between ourselves and them [i.e. the Russians] in the Balkans.’

The Prime Minister concluded by saying that Lord Halifax had been instructed to raise the matter with the State Department.

Lord Halifax telegraphed to Mr. Eden on the night of June 4-5 (a) that this message, which had crossed the report of his conversation with Mr. Hull, had put him in a difficulty because he had not said that the proposal had already been made to the Russians. Lord Halifax suggested that it would be better to defer a direct approach to the President on a matter upon which instructions had been given to him to speak to Mr. Hull until he (Lord Halifax) had reported progress. On June 7 Lord Halifax reported that Mr. (b) Stettinius had told him that he was much worried over the fact that we had put the proposal to the Russians without previously consulting the State Department.

On June 8 the Prime Minister telegraphed to Lord Halifax that (c) there was no question of spheres of influence.

‘We all have to act together, but someone must be playing the hand. It seems reasonable that the Russians should deal with the Roumanians and Bulgarians, upon whom their armies are impinging, and that we should deal with the Greeks, who are in our assigned theatre, who are our old allies, and for whom we sacrificed 40,000 men in 1941.’

The Prime Minister pointed out that ‘no fate could be worse for any country than to be subjected in these times to decisions reached by triangular or quadrangular telegraphing’. The Foreign Office also told Sir R. Campbell that the proposal had arisen out of Mr. Eden’s remarks to M. Gusev on May 5, and that there had been no opportunity of consulting the Americans beforehand, but that we had consulted them as soon as the Russians had taken up the proposal formally. The President replied on June 11 that ‘the military (d) responsible Government in any given territory will inevitably make decisions required by military developments’, but that the American

(a) Washington tel. 2983, Prisc. (b) R8988/349/67. (c) T1219/4 (R8988/349/67; Churchill Papers/66). (d) T1254/4, No. 557 (Churchill Papers,66; R9293/349/67).

view was that 'the natural tendency for such decisions to extend to other than military fields would be strengthened by an agreement of the type suggested. In our opinion, this would certainly result in the persistence of differences between you and the Soviets and in the division of the Balkan region into spheres of influence despite the declared intention to limit the arrangements to military matters.' The President therefore thought that arrangement should be made 'to establish consultative machinery to dispel misunderstandings and restrain the tendency towards the development of exclusive spheres'.

- (a) The Prime Minister replied on the same day that he was 'much concerned' by the President's message. He regarded it as essential that 'somebody' should 'have the power to plan and act. A Consultative Committee would be a mere obstruction, always overridden in any case of emergency by direct interchanges between you and me, or either of us and Stalin'. The Prime Minister quoted the Greek situation as showing the need for rapid action, and thought that it would be desirable to follow Soviet leadership on Roumania, where there were no British or American troops and the Russians 'will probably do what they like anyhow'. He asked: 'Why is all this effective direction to be broken up into a committee of mediocre officials such as we are littering about the world? Why can you and I not keep this in our own hands, considering how we see eye to eye about so much of it.'

- The Prime Minister proposed that his plan should have a trial of three months, after which the three Powers would review it. On
- (b) June 12 the State Department sent an official reply that, although it was natural for a government whose forces were operating in a given territory to take the lead in making decisions there, the proposed agreement would strengthen the tendency for such an initiative to extend to non-military spheres. Hence it would maintain rather than eliminate the divergencies of policy between ourselves and the Russians in the Balkans, and lead in fact to the establishment of spheres of influence. The State Department therefore did not approve of the plan, and preferred to give attention to machinery for consultation in Balkan affairs. On the following day, however,
- (c) President Roosevelt replied to the Prime Minister that he accepted a three months' trial, but that 'we must be careful to make it clear that we are not establishing any post-war spheres of influence'. The
- (d) Prime Minister answered on June 14 that Mr. Eden was informing M. Molotov of the proposal, and was making it clear that the reason for the three months' limit was that we should not 'prejudge the question of establishing post-war spheres of influence'.

(a) T1259/4, No. 700 (Churchill Papers/66; R9472/349/67). (b) R9514/349/67.
 (c) T1270/4, No. 560 (Churchill Papers/66; R9472/349/67). (d) T1282/4, No. 703
 (Churchill Papers/66; R9472/349/67).

The War Cabinet were informed of the President's reply on June 13.¹ Mr. Eden had already submitted on June 7 a memorandum on the evidence of Russian intentions in the Balkans, the methods by which those intentions were being carried out, and the steps which we should take with regard to our policy and military plans in the later phases of the war to safeguard our interests. In submitting this memorandum to the War Cabinet Mr. Eden pointed out that we should not regard as inevitable a direct clash of interests, and, sooner or later, a conflict in the Balkans. If we let the Russians think that we regarded such a development as inevitable, they would work on the same assumption.²

The Foreign Office memorandum began by distinguishing between the 'communisation' of the Balkans and the spread of Russian interests in the area. It was doubtful whether there was as yet any deliberate Russian attempt at 'communisation'. The leaders of the Partisans in Yugoslavia, E.A.M. in Greece, and L.N.C.³ in Albania were Communists, and, as such, were spreading their doctrines in the areas under their control, but their action was very different from a systematic attempt by some central organisation to 'communise' the whole Balkan peninsula. The spread of Russian influence, was again, another matter. The Russians were aiming at a predominant position in south-east Europe and were using the Communist-led movements in Yugoslavia, Albania and Greece as a means to this end, though not necessarily as an end in itself. These movements were most responsive to Russian influence and were most vigorous in resisting the Axis.

Furthermore, we ourselves were to blame for the existing situation in which Communist-led movements were the most powerful elements in Yugoslavia and Greece. The Russians had merely sat back and watched us do their work for them. They had come into the open only when we had shown signs of checking the movements, e.g. our continued recognition of King Peter and General Mihailovic, and, more recently, the strong line which we had taken against E.A.M. and the mutineers in the Greek forces.

The Foreign Office had frequently pointed out, in the early days of the Yugoslav Partisans and the Greek E.A.M., that there was a conflict between our immediate and our long-term interests. It was

¹ On July 10 Mr. Eden informed the War Cabinet that the arrangement had broken down. (c)

² Mr. Eden circulated to the War Cabinet on June 14, 1944, a telegram of May 26 from Sir A. Clark Kerr reporting comments in the Soviet press on the anniversary of the Anglo-Soviet treaty. Mr. Eden thought that the comments were of interest as evidence of the Soviet view that divergencies of opinion between the three Allies could be overcome by mutual understanding and goodwill. (d)

³ National Liberation Committee.

clear that support for these movements would give us the best military results, but that it would also produce the situation with which we were now faced. In Yugoslavia at least there had been military advantages, whereas in Greece E.A.M. had given us nothing but trouble. Our only constructive suggestion for the future of south-east Europe had been the confederation of the States concerned. The Russians, however, had rejected this solution on the ground that it would constitute a *cordon sanitaire* against them.

Russian Governments had always opposed, as a strategic threat to Russian security, the domination of the Balkans by any other Great Power. The Soviet Government, under the influence of victory, were reviving Russian traditional policy, and were obviously trying again for Balkan predominance, and hoping to secure it by traditional means, i.e. the establishment of governments subservient to Russian demands. In the nineteenth century we had Austria-Hungary as an ally to counter those Russian measures. Now we had no one on whose support we could rely. The evidence seemed to show that the Soviet Government had the following aims:

(1) *Roumania*. Here the Russians, after annexing portions of Roumanian territory, would probably require a friendly government over which they would have considerable control. There was practically no Communism in Roumania, and public feeling in the country was mainly anti-Russian, but if the Roumanians refused the present Soviet terms of surrender, they would only be treated more harshly.

(2) *Yugoslavia*. Tito, by his own efforts and our support, would probably emerge as the governing force, whether or not as the result of civil war in Serbia. The Red Army was also likely to gain contact with the Partisans and thus ensure Tito's position.

(3) *Bulgaria*. Soviet intentions were not clear, but were probably aimed at securing a friendly government, if not more, e.g. air bases.

(4) *Albania*. Here the Russian interest in the local Communist movement was merely that it might serve as a link between Tito and E.A.M.

(5) *Greece*. Until about two months ago the Russians had shown little interest in Greece. Then they began openly to support E.A.M. and to criticise our policy. They had now agreed to let us take the lead in Greece. The situation had also improved owing to the recent Lebanon agreement for an 'all-party' government and a national Greek army embodying all resistance units.¹ We should not, however, be too optimistic about the carrying out of the agreement.

The memorandum then considered what we could do to prevent the spread of Russian influence while avoiding a 'head-on' collision

¹ See below, Chapter XLIII, section (iii).

with the Soviet Government. We could not drop our support of the Communist-led movements. It was impossible for us now to abandon Tito or, without breaking the Lebanon agreement, boycott the Communists in Greece. It was also difficult for us to give full support to all the Communist elements in order to influence them in our direction and away from the Russians. This policy would mean the withdrawal of our support from the Kings of Greece and Yugoslavia, and once again, contrary to the Lebanon agreement, giving an exclusive backing to E.A.M. and E.L.A.S.

A third policy would be to approach the Soviet Government with a view to a mutual understanding not to interfere in Balkan politics. We were, however, taking an active part ourselves in Yugoslav and Greek affairs, and would doubtless wish to have our say as regards Bulgaria. In fact, we and the Russians each had an interest in the future of the Balkans as a whole which neither of us could abandon. Hence the only feasible plan was to consolidate our position in Greece and Turkey, to use Turco-Greek friendship as a fundamental factor in south-east Europe and the eastern Mediterranean and do all we could to spread our influence elsewhere without directly challenging the Russians. In all the Balkan countries there would be a fear of Russian domination, and a desire—probably even in Tito's case—to obtain some 'reinsurance' with Great Britain. One consequence of attempting to build on friendship with Turkey would be the abandonment of our present effort to force her into the war under the implied threat that otherwise she would not have our support at the peace settlement and after.¹

In spite of the Prime Minister's explanation, and his own acceptance of a three months' trial, the President remained uneasy about the proposal for a practical division of responsibility in the Balkans. He telegraphed to the Prime Minister on June 22 that the United States Government were disturbed that they had been consulted in the matter only after we had proposed it to the Russians. The Prime Minister replied on June 23 with a long explanation of his policy. He repeated that the Russians alone were able to act in Roumania, and that he had thought it agreed with the President that 'on the basis of their reasonable armistice terms, excepting indemnities, they should try to give coherent direction to what happened there'. On the other hand 'the Greek burden' rested 'almost entirely' with the British. 'It would be quite easy for me, on the general principle

¹ See also Volume IV, Chapter LII, section (i).

(a) T1340/4, No. 565 (Churchill Papers/66; R10039,68,67). (b) T1342/4, No. 712, Churchill Papers/66.

of slithering to the Left, which is so popular in foreign policy, to let things rip.' The result would be a 'reign of terror' in Greece under E.A.M. 'The only way I can prevent this is by persuading the Russians to quit boosting E.A.M. and ramming it forward with all their force. Therefore I proposed to the Russians a temporary working arrangement for the better conduct of the war. This was only a proposal, and had to be referred to you for your agreement.'

- The Prime Minister again defended his proposal. He referred to a message which the President had sent to Stalin about M. Mikolajczyk's visit to Washington¹ and to British action in Yugoslavia, and repeated that 'it would not be possible for three people in different parts of the world to work together effectively if no one of them may make any suggestion to either of the others without simultaneously
- (a) keeping the third informed'. The President accepted this explanation, but the Soviet Government took obvious advantage of the American reluctance to regard Greece, in particular, as temporarily within the sphere of British initiative. Mr. Eden had informed
 - (b) M. Gusev on June 19 of the President's approval, and of our hope that the Russians would now agree to the proposal. M. Gusev replied on June 30 that, in view of the American doubts about it, the Soviet Government thought it necessary to consider it further, and were themselves taking it up with the United States Government.

The Prime Minister minuted somewhat angrily on M. Gusev's letter:

'Does this mean that all we had settled with the Russians now goes down through the pedantic interference of the United States, and that Roumania and Greece are to be condemned to a regime of triangular telegrams in which the United States and ourselves are to interfere with the Russian treatment of Roumania, and the Russians are to boost up E.A.M. while the President pursues a personal pro-King policy in regard to Greece, and we have to try to make all things go sweet? If so, it will be a great disaster.'

Mr. Eden's view was that the result was likely to be as the Prime Minister had written, but that his own precipitancy in telegraphing to the President was largely the cause of the trouble.

- (c) The Prime Minister decided to make another attempt to get the acceptance of the plan. On July 12 he telegraphed to Stalin that although the Americans had agreed, after some discussion, to the three months' trial, Stalin himself seemed to find some difficulty in it. The Prime Minister asked whether he would not agree to give the plan 'its chance for three months. No one can say it affects the future

¹ See below, p. 191.

(a) T1364/4, No. 570, Churchill Papers/66. (b) R10483/68/67. (c) T1429/4 (Churchill Papers/447; R11010, 68, 67).

of Europe or divides it into spheres. But we can get a clear-headed policy in each theatre, and we will all report to the others what we are doing. However, if you tell me it is hopeless I shall not take it amiss.' Stalin replied on July 15 that, since the United States (a) Government had some doubts about the proposal, it was better to await their views. The United States Government, however, told the Russians on July 15 that they accepted the plan on a three- (b) months basis, in view of present war strategy, but that they were afraid that it might lead to a division of the Balkans into spheres of influence. They hoped therefore that the plan would not prejudice the efforts to direct Allied policies along lines of collaboration. They also assumed that it would not affect American interests, or those of other Allied Governments, in the Balkans.

The British Embassy in Washington does not appear to have been informed of this reply until July 25. Sir R. I. Campbell then reported it to the Foreign Office. The Prime Minister asked Mr. Eden whether the reply meant that the Americans had agreed to the three months' trial or was it all thrown in the pool again. Mr. Eden replied on August 8 that the Americans still appeared to be willing to agree, but would prefer the Russians to give up the plan. Meanwhile the Russians had sent a mission to E.L.A.S. in Greece without previous consultation with the British Government. Mr. Eden had protested strongly to M. Gusev on this action, and did not want to discuss the general arrangement until the particular question of the Russian Mission in Greece had been settled. He told the Prime Minister that if the Russian reply was conciliatory, we still had a chance of securing recognition of our predominant position in Greece.

(iv)

Mr. Eden's memorandum of August 9, 1944 on Soviet policy in Europe outside the Balkans.

On August 9, 1944, Mr. Eden circulated to the War Cabinet a (c) Foreign Office memorandum on Soviet policy in Europe outside the Balkans. In his introduction to this memorandum Mr. Eden regarded post-war Russian collaboration with Great Britain and the United States (and China) as probable if the Soviet Government were convinced that we intended to keep the Germans weak, and not to build up around Germany a combination of European States against the U.S.S.R. Even so this collaboration would be incomplete, but their wish for our support in keeping Germany down, and their desire not to bring about a combination against themselves would

(a) T1453/4 (Churchill Papers/447; R11212/68/67).
(c) WP(44)436; N4957/183 38.

(b) R11761/68/67.

almost certainly restrain the Russians from using the method of undisguised power politics in their dealings with other countries and from trying to exert an undue influence on their internal affairs. There was, of course, an alternative possibility. The Soviet Government might decide that it would pay them best to break all the rules and to take full advantage of post-war disorder in Europe. In this event they would come out openly against everything which their propaganda had associated with capitalism and imperialism; they would also use their immense power and influence in support of extreme left-wing movements everywhere, including Germany. This possibility was less likely if the Russians did not regard it as the sole means of preventing a European combination (of which the spearhead could only be Germany) against them.

There might indeed be two schools of thought in the Soviet Union—one of them collaborationist, and the other believing that the Soviet Union could and should trust no one, but must rely on its own power and the use which it could make of its friends in foreign countries. Stalin, fortunately, appeared to support the former of these two schools. In any case we should try to strengthen the collaborationists by paying regard to reasonable Soviet demands and by free and frank consultation.¹ We ought also to be no less frank than the Russians in speaking of our own requirements, views, and interests. The spread of Soviet power and influence might affect our own security against long-distance air attack and the security of our sea and air communications in the Mediterranean and elsewhere. Politically and commercially, we required the speediest possible restoration of order and security in Europe, and the confidence and friendship of as many as possible of the European Governments and peoples. Our financial power had largely gone; we had to try to compensate for the loss by winning the admiration of the European peoples for our way of life and our achievements in other fields. In the nineteenth century our power in Europe was greatly enhanced by the fact that we had stood for political as well as industrial progress, and had been willing to use our influence in the support of popular democratic forces against autocracy. In the post-war period our influence would depend largely on the extent to which the countries of Europe judged that our methods would be successful in dealing with their social and economic problems. The foundation of our post-war European policy must be the Anglo-Soviet alliance, which aimed at preventing any recurrence of German aggression; within this framework we might consolidate

¹ For the anxiety of the Foreign Office about this time lest the Soviet Government might come to hear that in some official papers and in current talk the British military authorities were considering the possibility of a hostile Russia after the war, see Volume V. Chapter LXIV, section (iii).

our position in the countries of western Europe and Scandinavia, in Turkey, Greece, and eventually, Italy. We should avoid a direct challenge to Russian interests in central European countries adjacent to the Soviet Union, but we ought to avail ourselves of every opportunity to spread British influence in these countries.

The memorandum dealt first with Germany, and began by assuming that the Soviet Government would require Germany to be rendered permanently innocuous and also to make the largest possible contribution in labour and goods to the reparation of the damage caused by Germans in Russia. The Russians were unlikely to forget that, in spite of their ten years' preparation for a defensive war, and of the fact that they had a numerical superiority of about 100 million, they had been unable to prevent the Germans from overrunning in four months a vast area of Soviet territory and coming very near to the capture of Moscow. They would therefore support drastic measures, including the dismemberment of Germany, and would set the greatest store by the co-operation of their Allies in preventing a revival of German power. They would thus be intensely suspicious if we or the United States appeared to be tender towards the Germans, or if we argued that a prosperous Germany was necessary for the prosperity of Europe as a whole, and, in particular, Great Britain.

On the other hand it was sometimes suggested that the Russian method of dealing with Germany would be to work for a Communist régime and then to make common cause with it against the other Great Powers. Although the Nazis had broken up or absorbed the Communist party in Germany, the Russian military successes had produced a certain interest in Communism among Germans. There were reports of a tendency in the *Wehrmacht* and the Nazi party to argue that, if Germany were going to lose the war, her best hope of survival would be to turn Communist. It was impossible to estimate the chances of the development of a German Communist Party, but the Russians were unlikely to work for combination with it. They would realise that a Communist Germany would almost certainly remain nationalistic and soon begin to think of revenge and domination.

We could therefore assume that Russia would try for a combination with Germany only if she believed that the other Great Powers were attempting to restore Germany as a bulwark against herself. The Germans, however, would be looking out for any weakening of Anglo-Soviet co-operation, and would be quick to offer themselves to either party. They could present themselves to the Soviet Government as Communists or Socialists ready to help in keeping the capitalist Western Powers from interference in Central or Eastern Europe, while they could take the opposite line with the West. Our

policy must be to avoid giving the Soviet Government cause for thinking that we were building up a *bloc* against them, since, as they rightly knew, any such *bloc* would inevitably require, sooner or later, German co-operation. We, and still more the Americans, might well find it difficult to agree with the severity of Russian ideas about the post-war treatment of Germany; we must do our best to meet the Russians half-way and to explain to them the reasons for any disagreement with them.

The memorandum then dealt with Franco-Russian relations. It was clear that, whatever measures the United Nations might take to prevent a recurrence of German aggression, the French must feel that their best safeguard lay in the existence of a powerful and friendly Russia which would contain Germany from the East. Franco-Russian 'ideological' differences would probably be less, since post-war opinion in France was likely to gravitate towards the left, while Russia would also have an interest in strengthening France as a reinsurance against Germany. For this purpose the Russians would want not merely a strong France, but a French Government well-disposed to the U.S.S.R. and unwilling to take part in an anti-Soviet combination.

We might therefore expect a close Franco-Russian understanding. Such an understanding ought to benefit our own relations with each of the two countries. We should not want a Communist régime in France looking exclusively to Moscow, but a development of this kind was unlikely. The Communists would be influential as a well-organised and active French political party, and the younger generation in France might look to Russia rather than to Great Britain or the United States for leadership; an attempt to impose Communism on Frenchmen had little chance of success. Moreover, all parties in France, in spite of irritation against Great Britain, realised that, for geographical reasons, solidarity with us was essential to French security. On the Russian side we had no reason to expect that the Soviet Government intended to exploit their relations with France to our disadvantage. They had made no attempt hitherto to use for this purpose our difficulties with the French National Committee. There was also no evidence that they were interfering in French internal affairs with a view to increasing Communist influence. Their interests would be better served by the maintenance of a government of the Popular Front type in which the Communist party played an important but not necessarily a predominant part.

The third section of the memorandum dealt with Central Europe. Here Soviet interests required that Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Austria should be free from German control and that at least the first three of these States should be closely linked with the Soviet security system. The Russians were suspicious of a federation of

these Central European States since they feared that under Polish leadership such a *bloc* might be as hostile to the U.S.S.R. as to Germany and might revive the *cordon sanitaire* which followed the Bolshevik revolution. The Soviet-Czechoslovak treaty was probably an indication of Soviet policy in Central Europe. It bound Czechoslovakia to the Soviet Union, and also provided for the accession of neighbouring States, e.g. Poland, in resistance to German aggression. The Russians were probably sure enough of Czechoslovak support to raise no objection to M. Benes's policy of maintaining a balance between the East and the West. In fact Czechoslovakia might be equally useful to the Soviet Union as a link with the west and to ourselves and France as a link with the east.

Although Soviet policy was fundamentally hostile to the pre-war semi-authoritarian regime in Poland and to the oligarchic regime in Hungary, there had been no signs of a desire to impose Communism on any of the Central European countries. Russian relations were closest with Czechoslovakia, a 'petit bourgeois' country with a capitalist structure of society and a prosperous lower middle class and peasantry.

The most likely source of dispute between ourselves and the U.S.S.R. would be over Poland. Russia was determined to prevent a revival of pre-war Polish policy when Poland had ambitions to play the rôle of a great Power, act as a balance between Germany and Russia, and, in alliance with the Western powers, form a barrier against closer Russian contacts with Europe. The Soviet Government would therefore oppose the return to power of any of the pre-war Polish ruling class, and would remove once and for all the possibility of territorial disputes between Poland and the U.S.S.R. in the east while at the same time preventing the chances of a Polish-German *rapprochement* by the extension of Polish frontiers westwards and to the Baltic at German expense. There were signs that the Russians were ready to welcome a new régime in Poland based on the democratic Peasant and Socialist parties.

If this 'broad-based' régime could be established, there was reason to hope that Poland would be left with real independence. Our difficulty was that large numbers of Poles were relying upon British and American support against the territorial and strategic demands which Russia would make of Poland. It would be fatal to Anglo-Soviet relations and to Poland and the future peace of Europe if we encouraged the Poles to trust to such support instead of staking everything upon achieving good relations with Russia. At the same time there were limits to the concessions which Poland could be expected to make. Nevertheless, as far as Soviet intentions were known to us, we were justified in thinking that a solution acceptable to both sides was possible. Once Soviet suspicions of the Poles and of British

policy towards Poland had been removed, there was no reason why we should not increase our economic exchanges with Poland and spread British influence chiefly in the cultural sphere. We should, however, avoid military commitments except jointly with the Russians.

It would also be undesirable for us to assume military commitments to Czechoslovakia similar to those assumed by the U.S.S.R. With regard to Austria, we had already agreed with the Americans and the Russians that Austrian independence should be restored and maintained. We had also agreed in principle upon a joint tripartite occupation of the country, and we were working out plans for handing over the government—as a viable and independent concern—as soon as possible to the Austrian people. Soviet policy might be expected to support any extreme left-wing Socialist group which might emerge in Austria, but this support might well be tempered by the fact that in the past Austrian left-wing Socialists had not opposed an *Anschluss* provided that Germany were not a Nazi State. In any case the restoration of an independent Austria would be a very difficult practical problem and would require the full co-operation of the major Allies and also of Austria's neighbours. Here Czechoslovakia would play an important part. Russia would probably be influenced by Czechoslovak wishes and Czechoslovakia hoped to find in Austria a republic with an economic and social structure similar to her own. We might indeed have to overcome Soviet suspicions that Vienna would again become too powerful and act as a nucleus for a Danubian Federation which might aspire to the Balkan rôle of the old Austro-Hungarian Empire.

There was some risk of conflict between British and Soviet policy in Hungary. Russia was likely to back territorial claims against Hungary not only from our allies, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, but also from Roumania, since the latter could most easily be compensated for the loss of Bessarabia by receiving back the whole of Transylvania. There would be no difficulty if Russian policy were limited to restoring their lost territories to Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, supporting a more equitable territorial settlement in Transylvania, and insisting upon far-reaching measures of land reform and the establishment of a more genuinely democratic régime in Hungary. We should wish to promote all these objectives. On the other hand, there was a danger of revolutionary developments in Hungary similar to the excesses of the Bela Kun régime after the first war. The Soviet Government would not necessarily encourage such developments but might find it difficult not to support them. Our main interests in the Danube basin were the maintenance of peace and the development of economic prosperity. It was impossible to bring about an absolutely just territorial settlement in the area,

yet we might try to improve upon the Treaty of Trianon by diminishing the number of Magyars under alien rule. Otherwise Hungary would remain a potential source of trouble and, despite Hungarian dislike of Germany, would link up with the Germans if there were a revival of German strength. The Russians, however, might be expected to be aware of this danger.

The memorandum then turned to Italy, the Low Countries, Scandinavia, and the Iberian Peninsula. Italy, as the first country on the European mainland to be freed from German occupation, was a test of the attitude of the U.S.S.R. towards those States which were not her neighbours. The Soviet Government had shown a close interest in Italian affairs since the armistice. They had argued that their representation in Italy was not on a basis of equality with that of Great Britain and the United States. They had established—without prior notification, and in spite of Anglo-American agreement to the appointment of Soviet representatives on the Allied Control Commission—direct relations with the Italian Government, and exchanged diplomatic representatives. They had a large staff of Soviet officials in Italy and maintained close relations with the Italian Communist party; there was good evidence that they supplied the latter with ample funds. They had secured the return to Italy of Signor Togliatti, the former Italian member of the Comintern, and now the acknowledged leader of the Italian Communists. On the other hand the Soviet representative on the Italian Advisory Council had been reasonable in his dealings with the British and American authorities in Italy, and the Italian Communist Party, clearly under orders from Moscow, had suddenly given up attacking the monarchy and Marshal Badoglio and was advocating Communist-Catholic co-operation. The Communists were, however, continuing to belittle and criticise Allied activities in Italy and to advertise the achievements of the U.S.S.R. in peace and war.

The Soviet Government clearly intended to maintain their control over the Italian Communist Party and to promote its interests at the expense of the Socialist parties. They were likely in this matter to have considerable success. There was a natural tendency to swing from one extreme to another—from Fascism to Communism. The Italian Communists had the glamour of having survived Fascist persecution and of emerging from it with a more energetic and effective programme and appeal than that of any other anti-Fascist party. To these advantages would be added, with the liberation of the north, the facts that the stronghold of Italian Communism was in the industrial cities and that the north Italian Resistance movement was to a great extent Communist-led and inspired. Finally, the economic position of Italy after the war would be very bad, and a further impetus would thereby be given to the spread of Communism.

A strong and active Communist Party in Italy, however, did not necessarily imply that the Italian Government would fall under Communist control. There were also strong anti-communist elements in the country which might be expected gradually to assert themselves. These elements would look to Great Britain and the United States for encouragement and support; their resurgence and capacity to establish themselves in power might well depend upon this practical encouragement and support. Even so the Italian Communist party would not wish to appear as anti-British, and the Soviet Government's desire to exercise influence in Italy was due mainly to the fact that they saw in a strong Communist Party the best guarantee against the danger of Italy being drawn into the German orbit.

We were unlikely to have any differences with the Soviet Government over Belgium and the Netherlands. Stalin had told Mr. Eden in Moscow in 1941 that he regarded these countries as entirely within the British sphere of influence. We should therefore act on the assumption that the U.S.S.R. would only welcome the strengthening of links between ourselves and the Low Countries in order to build up a more effective barrier against Germany in the north-west. There was no reason to assume a great increase in the importance of the Belgian or Dutch Communist parties, or a situation in which the Russians might be tempted to intervene in Dutch or Belgian affairs contrary to British interests.

Similarly there was unlikely to be a clash of Anglo-Soviet interests over Scandinavia. The Russians claimed Finland as within their security sphere. Stalin had told Mr. Eden in 1941 that the Soviet Government wanted a restoration of their frontier of 1941 with Finland, the return of Petsamo, and some kind of military alliance which would give the Russians the right to maintain naval and military bases on Finnish territory. We had agreed to these terms; although we hoped that Finland would be left with some real independence—at least in cultural and economic matters—and a parliamentary regime, Russian influence would be predominant in the country. We need not, and indeed could not, contest such influence.

Stalin had also told Mr. Eden in 1941 that Norway and Denmark should be restored to their former frontiers, and that the Soviet Government would not object to British bases in the two countries but would like a guarantee regarding the entrance to the Baltic. The Soviet view in these matters did not seem to have changed. It was sometimes suggested that the Russians might want more ice-free ports in the north, but they already had Petsamo and were most unlikely to seize any northern Norwegian territory. The Russians would support left-wing parties in Scandinavia as elsewhere; there was, however, little chance of the spread of Communism in Norway, Denmark or Sweden.

Russia had no direct strategic or economic interests in Spain or Portugal; her concern with those countries had been of importance only when developments in them seemed likely to affect the general European balance. Russian interference in the Spanish Civil War had been mainly for practical reasons, and, in spite of their propaganda, the Soviet Government were likely to take a practical view of British and American policy towards Spain. They knew that our own interest in the approaches to the western Mediterranean would lead us to prevent Spain from becoming an enemy. They had thus no motive to challenge our position at Gibraltar or generally in Spain, though they might wish to be associated with future security arrangements in the Gibraltar area if other vital strategical areas throughout the world were also placed under a United Nations régime.

There was clearly little prospect of a resumption of friendly, or even normal relations between the existing Spanish régime and the U.S.S.R. It was unlikely, however, that the Franco régime would long survive the war. The most probable development would be the establishment of a moderate republic or a liberal monarchy. In either case Russia would probably not wish to play a dominant part. We should then encourage the resumption of normal Russo-Spanish relations as the bitter feelings left by the Civil War died down. A third possibility was a revolutionary movement of the extreme Left leading, almost certainly, to a return to the chaos of the Civil War. This situation would put a very heavy strain on Anglo-Soviet relations. We should find it hard to persuade the Soviet Government not to back extreme Left elements, and, since British opinion would again be divided, we should be faced with a situation similar to that in the Civil War. Hence, until there was more certainty of stability in Spain, a restoration of Russo-Spanish relations might not be to our interest, since a Russian Embassy in Spain would act as a focus for the discontented elements of the Left.

(v)

The treatment of the Axis satellites: the surrender of Finland, Roumania and Bulgaria: Russian attempts to limit British and American participation in the work of the Allied Control Commissions: Hungarian peace approaches: the surrender of Hungary.

The War Cabinet did not discuss the Foreign Office memorandum on Russian intentions in the Balkans and the memorandum had a certain academic look about it even at the time when it was written. The Russians were already moving forward rapidly on their main fronts. In the north the Finns lost Viborg on June 20. In the centre, after retaking Minsk on July 3, the Russian armies reached the

Niemen at the end of the month. At this time they had advanced south of the Pripet marshes to the Vistula. In August and September their successes continued. Finland surrendered on September 10 and almost at the same time the Roumanians signed an armistice with the Soviet Government.¹

These surrenders would have come earlier if the States concerned had been free to make them without the certainty of immediate German counter-action. There had indeed been secret overtures from individuals or groups of the satellite countries and the British Government had already raised the question of an agreed Allied policy towards

¹ Between the end of April and the early part of June there was a sharp exchange of messages between the Prime Minister and M. Molotov over a somewhat absurd Russian allegation that the British Government had sent a secret and semi-official mission to

- (a) General Antonescu 'for purposes unknown to the Soviet Government'. On April 29 M. Molotov asked the Prime Minister, in offensive terms, for an explanation. The facts behind this extraordinary charge were that in November, 1943, S.O.E. had sent three officers into Roumania on a secret mission to keep in touch with the opposition leader, M. Maniu, organise sabotage against German communications, and work for the overthrow of General Antonescu's pro-German régime. They had no authority to conduct political negotiations or commit the British Government to any. The Russians knew generally, and had approved of the British secret contacts with M. Maniu; hence they had not been told specifically of the despatch of the three officers, (see below, p. 136). The officers were captured almost at once by the Roumanian gendarmes. They were well treated, and the senior of them had sent five messages. The fact that the officers had been captured was not kept secret in Roumania, and the Axis press put out an unfounded story that they had brought into the country a photostat copy of an alleged treaty which the Germans had proposed to the Soviet Government and of which the terms were at the expense of Roumania. The Soviet Government seem to have accepted this story of the photostat copy as genuine.

- (c) The Prime Minister and Mr. Eden agreed that M. Molotov's charge of bad faith should be given a very sharp answer. The Prime Minister pointed out that we had accepted the proposed Russian terms for Roumania, and were prepared to co-operate in every way to secure these terms, and to follow Russian leadership in the matter. 'Of course if you do not believe a single word we say it really would be better to let things run out as they will. But considering the tremendous business we have in hand together, I trust you will consider carefully your answer before you send it.'

- (d) Sir A. Clark Kerr was instructed, when delivering the message, to give M. Molotov a full explanation of the actual facts. M. Molotov replied to the Prime Minister that 'in spite of all ingenuity' his message was 'unconvincing', and that neither he nor Sir A. Clark Kerr had given an adequate account of the matter. Mr. Eden thought that the
- (e) Prime Minister should take no notice of this reply, and that Sir A. Clark Kerr should be instructed to repeat in full his own previous explanation. M. Molotov then admitted that Sir A. Clark Kerr had given him full information, but he repeated in vague and almost meaningless terms that the question was still obscure.

The Foreign Office again thought that it was better to leave the matter alone, since M. Molotov would not apologise for his rudeness, though he clearly had to give up his accusation. The Prime Minister, however, was unwilling to allow M. Molotov to doubt his word, and considered that Sir A. Clark Kerr had not spoken with sufficient firmness.* On June 11 Sir A. Clark Kerr sent another letter of explanation to M. Molotov.

- (f) This letter was unanswered at the end of June. The Foreign Office then hoped that the Prime Minister would pay no further attention to the matter. At the beginning of September no answer had been received. Sir A. Clark Kerr then took the opportunity of repeating the facts once again to M. Molotov. He reported that M. Molotov obviously knew that he had been wrong, but that there was no chance of getting an apology from him.

*The Prime Minister commented: 'This is not the way to get on with the Russians'. Mr. Eden minuted this sentence to Sir A. Cadogan: 'Yet no one is more effusive to the Russians than (the) P.M.'

(a) T1011/4 (Churchill Papers/374; R6999/294/37). (b) R7016/294/37. (c) T1026/4 (Churchill Papers/374; R7016/294/37). (d) T1064/4 (Churchill Papers/374; R7556/294/37). (e) R7829, 8340, 9078, 10082/294/37. (f) R15947/294/37.

such approaches. After the Casablanca declaration the Allies were committed to a demand for unconditional surrender, but there was no reason for insistence upon this demand if it prevented the defection of Germany's minor confederates. On March 10, 1943 (the immediate context was a Hungarian approach¹), the British Government asked the United States and Soviet Governments for their views on the matter.² The British Government considered the separate (a) problem of each satellite. As far as Finland was concerned we did not wish to be associated with any mediatory action (which we understood the United States to be considering) between the Finns and the Russians. If the Finnish Government approached us we should say that they must themselves approach the Soviet Government.³ We had had no approaches from Roumania or Bulgaria. If any were received from the Roumanian Government we should tell them that they must deal in the first place with Russia as the country primarily concerned. In any case the Soviet Government were in a better position than ourselves to offer inducements to Roumania to leave the Axis. If we had an approach from Bulgaria, we should have to keep in mind that the Greek, Yugoslav and Turkish Governments would be most suspicious of negotiations between ourselves and the Bulgarians. Meanwhile, we should state in our propaganda to Bulgaria, as we were proposing to do in the case of Hungary, that we could not enter into any undertaking about the future of Hungary or negotiate with individual Hungarians on the basis that in due course they might be able to establish a Hungarian Government. We should also add to our warning that Hungary would get neither sympathy nor consideration from us while she remained with the Axis a statement that we had been glad to notice certain satisfactory internal developments in Hungary, but obviously we could have nothing to do with a régime which had allied itself with the Axis and made unprovoked attacks on our allies.⁴

Neither the United States nor the Soviet Governments sent an (b) immediate reply. The former answered early in May that they approved in general of our suggestions with regard to Hungary.⁵ The Soviet Government did not reply until June 7. They also agreed generally about Hungary,⁶ and thought that any informal contacts

¹ See below p. 141-2.

² The despatch was addressed primarily to the United States Government. A summary of the despatch was telegraphed to Moscow on March 14. An *aide-mémoire* giving the substance of the despatch is printed in *F.R.U.S.*, 1943, I, 485-6.

³ We had already told the Finns that they were mistaken in thinking that they were fighting only Russia and that, at the end of the war, the United States and, to a lesser extent, Great Britain would protect them.

⁴ See also below, p. 142.

⁵ See *F.R.U.S.*, ib. 492-3.

⁶ See also below, p. 143-4.

(a) C2652/155/18. (b) C5265, 7263, 8239/155/18; C6684/331/21.

with the satellite Governments should be based on four principles: (i) unconditional surrender, (ii) return of occupied territories, (iii) indemnities for war damage, (iv) punishment of those responsible for participation in the war. On the other hand the Soviet Government stood for the preservation and independence of the satellite States.

- (a) A full reply to the Russian proposals was not sent until September 6.¹ The Soviet Government was then told that we agreed with their principles subject to certain reservations. (i) The formula of unconditional surrender should not be presented in a way likely to discourage any groups in satellite countries which were working for the reduction of their countries' contribution to the Axis war effort and for eventual withdrawal from the Axis camp. We noted in this connexion the Soviet statement that they stood for the preservation and independence of the satellite States. (ii) With regard to the return of the territories occupied by the satellite States, we had made it clear that we could not recognise in advance of the general peace settlement any particular European frontiers, but we agreed that the satellite States should restore to the Allied countries concerned all the territories which those States had occupied during or immediately before the war. (iii) Until we had completed our study of the question of reparation we could give no final opinion. Meanwhile we favoured the inclusion, in any terms of surrender presented to the satellite States, of provisions to secure compliance with 'such directions as the United Nations may prescribe regarding restitution, deliveries, services or payments by way of reparation and payment of the costs of occupation'.

- (b) Before the Russian advance had gained momentum in the summer of 1944, Mr. Eden had raised once more the question whether the principle of unconditional surrender should not be modified in the case of the Axis satellites. The fact that the Allies wanted to detach them from Germany made it desirable that there should be a certain latitude in discussing the conditions upon which they might come out of the war. The matter was of some urgency because we were likely to be approached in the immediate future by Roumanian and possibly also by Bulgarian emissaries. Furthermore the Soviet Government had already announced that they were not asking for unconditional surrender by Finland,² and their terms definitely provided for negotiations on certain specified subjects.

At Sir O. Sargent's suggestion Mr. Eden wrote to the Prime Minister on March 8 that we might propose to the United States and

¹ An interim reply was sent on July 18.

² In a broadcast of February 29, 1944, the Soviet Government had stated that 'the rumours spread by some organs of the foreign press to the effect that the Soviet Government had demanded Finland's unconditional surrender . . . are without foundation'.

(a) C7263/155/18. (b) U1974/377/70.

Soviet Governments that for purposes of propaganda and peace-feelers the three Governments should be free from the Moscow decision¹ as far as concerned the minor European allies of the Germans, and should be at liberty jointly to decide, according to circumstances, whether or not to insist on unconditional surrender. Mr. Churchill agreed with this proposal. On March 17 instructions were accordingly sent to the British Embassies at Washington and Moscow. (a)

The Soviet Government replied on March 30 that—subject to hearing the American views—they favoured the British proposal in regard to the European satellites, but thought that the principle of unconditional surrender as applying to Germany should be fully maintained and must not be subject to doubt. Mr. Hull also (b) agreed with the British proposal, but found it difficult to persuade the President—as the original author of the formula—to accept any modification of it. On the night of April 12–13 Lord Halifax reported a memorandum from the State Department that the United States Government regarded any general departure from the doctrine of unconditional surrender as undesirable and likely to serve as a precedent for future cases. They would prefer to maintain the principle intact and to consider particular cases in which modification was suggested by the British or Soviet Governments.

This American proposal was unsatisfactory because it was of no use for purposes of propaganda. Moreover it seemed inconsistent with a proposal which the State Department had themselves made on (c) March 28 for a three-Power declaration of policy towards the Axis satellites. The aim of such a declaration was to encourage the satellites to break with Germany. The text of this declaration was (d) agreed at the beginning of May and published on May 12. The four satellites, Hungary, Roumania, Bulgaria and Finland, were warned that, in spite of their realisation that a complete Nazi defeat was inevitable, and of their desire to get out of the war, their present policies and attitudes were contributing materially to the strength of the German war machine. The satellites still had it within their power, by withdrawing from the war and ceasing their collaboration with Germany, to lessen their ultimate sacrifices. On the other hand, the longer they continued at war in collaboration with Germany, the more rigorous would be the terms imposed upon them. They must therefore decide whether they would persist in their hopeless and calamitous policy of opposing the inevitable Allied victory while there was yet time for them to contribute to that victory. The State Department was inclined to argue (in order to support the President's demands for the maintenance of the principle of unconditional

¹ See Volume II, Chapter XXXIV, section (v).

(a) U2699/41/73. (b) U2674, 3142/377/70. (c) R5884/2539 67. (d) R6063/2539/67.

- surrender) that the declaration was not incompatible with this principle, since it was merely an advice, or rather warning, to the satellites in their own interest to come over to the Allied side. At the
- (a) beginning of July, however, the State Department convinced the President that there was good reason not to refer to unconditional surrender in our propaganda to the satellites.

- The fact that the Russians opened an offensive on Roumanian territory on August 20 was more responsible than this declaration for bringing about the Roumanian surrender. Up to this time the Roumanians, though increasingly worried about their position, felt unable to leave the German side or to do more than make secret declarations of their wish to do so. These secret overtures had begun
- (b) in 1943. In August of that year, M. Maniu, leader of the United Opposition parties, had sent a message to the British and American Missions in Stockholm that within twenty-four hours of the arrival of British and American forces on the Danube the existing Roumanian dictatorship would be overthrown. The Roumanians, however, were unwilling to negotiate with the Russians without 'definite and well-founded' British and American guarantees.¹ On November 10 M. Maniu told the British Government that he wanted to send a special delegate out of Roumania to discuss arrangements for a political change-over in the country. The British answer was that an emissary would be received only if he came to discuss operational details with regard to the overthrow of the existing regime in Roumania and its replacement by a Government prepared to surrender unconditionally to the three principal Allies. The Soviet Government approved of this reply, and assumed that Soviet representatives would take part in the negotiations which would be held in Cairo.

In mid-December, however, the Roumanians said that they (including Marshal Antonescu) had decided that they would surrender unconditionally but that they would have to time their surrender to coincide with the entry into Roumania of British and American as well as Russian troops. Owing to fear of the Germans discovering their plans, they would not for the present send a letter on the subject, but at the appropriate time an officer would come to Cairo to discuss armistice terms and an effective date of surrender.

¹ Mr. Eden, on October 25, 1943, at the Moscow meeting of Foreign Secretaries, mentioned the overtures from M. Maniu. M. Molotov thought that there should be no

(c) dealings with the Roumanian Government except on the basis of unconditional surrender, and that there was no advantage in negotiating with the Maniu group. Mr. Eden said that, in the British view, the Soviet Government should decide the question, and that the British Government, so far as lay in their power, would act in the sense of what M. Molotov had said. Mr. Hull agreed.

(a) U3829/377/70. (b) R13030/1436/37 (1943). (c) N6921/3666/38 (1943).

At the beginning of March, 1944, Prince Stirbey, a former Roumanian Prime Minister and a great landowner and financier, arrived in Turkey. He was taken to Cairo where he explained to Lord Moyne, Minister Resident in the Middle East, that his instructions came from Marshal Antonescu as well as from M. Maniu, and that his mission had also the support of the King and the Roumanian Communist Party. The mission was, however, purely informative: he had no instructions to conduct negotiations. The Foreign Office told Lord Moyne to say to Prince Stirbey that, if the (a) Roumanians waited to surrender until the Allied forces gave them immediate protection, they would have made no serious contribution to the Allied war effort. If they wanted to 'work their passage home', they must facilitate an Allied invasion of the Balkans, and not merely take advantage of it after it had happened. They must be prepared, therefore, for a time to face a German occupation.

The discussions with Prince Stirbey made somewhat slow progress. The armistice proposals made to the Roumanians were, with British and American consent, drawn up primarily by the Russians; the Russian terms, as an American departmental memorandum¹ pointed out at the time, were not tripartite, but were 'frankly based on the practical premise' that the war with Roumania was 'Russia's own business'. There was no mention of unconditional surrender, and the Russians agreed to join with Roumania in regaining for her the whole or most of Transylvania. There was also no mention of Allied participation in any political decisions about Roumania. At Mr. Churchill's request the reference to the return of Transylvania was qualified by the words 'subject to confirmation at the peace settlement', and British and American participation was secured for the decision of political matters.

The Roumanians were still afraid to risk German reprisals. A message was then sent to Marshal Antonescu that he must accept the (b) agreed Allied terms within three days and give evidence of his acceptance by some positive action. If he refused the terms, and M. Maniu overthrew the Government, the Allies would offer him the same terms. Marshal Antonescu was completely under German control and M. Maniu could not carry out a *coup d'état* in the face of German troops in the country. Hence, although desultory exchanges continued to take place, nothing happened until after the Russians had begun their offensive.

Three days after the opening of this offensive on August 20, King Michael carried out a *coup d'état* against the collaborationist Government of General Antonescu and at once asked for an armistice; the new

¹ *F.R.U.S.*, 1944, IV, 172.

(a) R4029/294/37. (b) R5997/294/37; R6137/294/37.

Government accepted the Russian condition that they should declare war on Germany. On September 12 a Roumanian delegation, headed by a Communist, signed a formal armistice agreement in Moscow. This document was on the lines of the armistice with Italy, in the sense that the Roumanian surrender was made to the United Nations, but the preamble stated that the implementation of the terms was entrusted to the control of the Soviet High Command, acting on behalf of the Allied Powers, while, in article 18, the Allied Control Commission was also described as undertaking 'the regulation and control over the execution of the present terms under the general direction and instructions of the Allied (Soviet) High Command'. These terms thus perpetuated the Prime Minister's plan for a temporary division of spheres of influence. The Russians were likely, and indeed certain to use the wording of the armistice as justifying sole control by themselves, and to disregard in peace time the American views on joint consultation.

The Bulgarians had also offered to surrender. The circumstances in which this surrender took place were, from the British point of view, disquieting. The Bulgarians had already put forward a number of 'peace-feelers', especially after the bombing of Sofia, but the British Government had taken no notice of them since they had not come officially from the Bulgarian Government.¹ In the second week of August, an approach was made to the British Embassy at Ankara by M. Moushanov, a former President of the Bulgarian Sobranje.

- (a) M. Moushanov claimed that he was speaking on behalf of the Bulgarian Government. With the approval of the Foreign Office Sir H. Knatchbull-Hugessen saw M. Moushanov on August 16. After obtaining the agreement of the United States Government Mr. Eden instructed Sir H. Knatchbull-Hugessen on August 25 to send M. Moushanov to Cairo for discussion if it were clear that he had authorisation from the Bulgarian Government to treat for an armistice. M. Moushanov had gone back to Sofia to report on his mission.
- (b) He returned to Turkey on August 29, and on August 30 was flown to Cairo. On August 26 the Bulgarian Government announced that they had decided to adopt a policy of complete neutrality, and

¹ In August, 1943, the Foreign Office gave the State Department a memorandum on British policy towards Bulgaria. They pointed out that Bulgaria must accept responsibility for her 'traitorous action'. They mentioned the answer of the British Minister to M. Filoff, the Bulgarian Prime Minister, in 1941, when he (M. Filoff) said that Bulgaria was able to deal with her independence without British help. (See Volume I, p. 531.)

The British Government therefore were not committed to the survival of an independent Bulgarian State and would not recognise the Bulgarian annexations of Yugoslav and Greek territory. The 'tentative' British idea for the future of south-east Europe was that these regions should be grouped in some form of confederation. Such a confederation would include Bulgaria, but we would not commit ourselves to its inclusion as an independent State and would certainly not allow the present Royal house to remain.

(a) R12626/12279/7. (b) R14675/2734/7.

had therefore sent a note to the German Legation asking for the withdrawal of German troops from Bulgarian territory. Mr. Eden then asked the Soviet Government not to encourage the Bulgarian Government to think that the Allies would accept a change to neutrality (which would have allowed the escape of the German formations in the country). The Soviet answer was to open a violent press and radio campaign against the Bulgarian Government. On August 29, however, the Soviet Government informed the British Government that they did not wish to take part in the consideration of the terms of surrender for Bulgaria since they were not at war with her.

Meanwhile a new Bulgarian Government was formed. On September 4 this Government repeated the announcement that Bulgaria would follow a policy of complete neutrality. On the following day—without any previous consultation—M. Molotov told Sir A. Clark Kerr (a) that the Soviet Government intended to declare war on Bulgaria immediately. M. Molotov's only explanation of this odd change of attitude was that the Bulgarian reaffirmation of neutrality had been 'the last straw'. The Soviet Government had already asked the Bulgarian Government to break off relations with Germany; owing to military reasons, they could wait no longer.

A Soviet army now invaded Bulgaria. The new Government fell at once, and was succeeded on September 6 by a Government of the extreme left (four of its members were Communists) which asked the Russians for an armistice and declared war on Germany. The Soviet Government then suggested that the armistice should be negotiated in Moscow, but the Foreign Office replied that, in view of the fact that discussions were already taking place in Cairo, they would prefer them to be continued there. The Russians then proposed Ankara. They also asked (i) that Bulgaria should be granted the status of co-belligerent, (ii) that the Allied Control Commission in Bulgaria—as in Roumania and Finland—should be under Russian control, and that the British and American representatives should act merely as observers and liaison officers, and (iii) that the armistice agreement should be signed by a Russian general. (b)

The Foreign Office view was that, if we conceded all these demands, we should give the impression that we were leaving to the Russians the conduct of the armistice discussions and the implementation of the terms. Our credit in south-eastern Europe would thereby be affected, and we should lose authority especially in Greece and Turkey. We ought therefore in the first place to insist upon the proposal which we had already made to the Soviet Government that the evacuation of Greek and Yugoslav territory by Bulgarian troops and

(a) R14276/74/7. (b) R14639, 14917/2734/7.

officials should be a preliminary condition to any armistice discussions.¹ The Soviet Government had themselves insisted upon the withdrawal of German forces from Finland before they opened armistice discussions with the Finns.

We could not agree to allow Bulgaria the status of co-belligerent, though we might find it difficult to prevent the Russians from using Bulgarian troops if they wished to do so. We should probably have to agree to a Russian chairmanship of the Allied Control Commission, but we should require for ourselves and the Americans an equal share in its actual work and responsibility. We should accept Ankara as the place of negotiation (it would be far better than Moscow), and we might agree to a double signature of the armistice—i.e. General Wilson would sign for ourselves and (if they agreed) the Americans, and a Russian general would sign on behalf of the Soviet Government.

- Mr. Eden was at this time with the Prime Minister in Quebec. He
- (a) telegraphed their views on September 17.² They regarded as 'exasperating and disingenuous' the Soviet action in claiming a lead in the armistice discussions and attempting to obtain the status of co-belligerent for Bulgaria after they had been at war with her for only a few days. We had always recognised, however, that the Soviet Government should take the lead in Bulgaria if they accepted our claim to do so in Greece. On this condition therefore we might accept the Russian proposals though we could not agree to a grant of co-belligerent status. A further question arose whether we should try to extend the proposed arrangement for a division of influence to the Balkans as a whole. We had already suggested its application to Roumania and Greece. We might ask the Soviet Government to agree—as part of the general arrangement—that there should be close consultation between us with regard to Yugoslavia, and that our common interest required Yugoslavia to be a strong, united, independent, and democratic State. We had already joined with the Soviet and United States Governments in a declaration favourable to Albanian independence. This should be sufficient to provide for close Anglo-Soviet consultation.

Mr. Eden noted that the United States Government would probably dislike our proposed arrangement but that the Prime Minister

¹ In a memorandum of May 31 submitted to the War Cabinet Mr. Eden had pointed out that the Russians might try to secure an outlet to the Aegean for Bulgaria at the peace settlement. For the discussions in Moscow about the percentages of predominance to be allotted to Russia and the Western Allies in Bulgaria and the other Balkan countries see below, pp. 150-51.

² The second Quebec conference was held between September 12 and 16. The business was primarily military and concerned operations in the Far East, but see also below, pp. 148-49.

(a) R14800/2734/7. (b) WP(44)289; R8542.74.7.

would speak to the President about it. On his return to England Mr. Eden at once discussed the question in the Foreign Office. He agreed with their proposals, and telegraphed on September 19 to the Prime Minister that he had come to the conclusion that we ought not to offer a 'bargain' over Bulgaria. We could allow Soviet predominance in Roumania and Finland whose frontiers adjoined those of the Soviet Union, but we could not do so with regard to Bulgaria which bordered on Greece, Yugoslavia and Turkey. We should assert our claim to predominance in Greece, and could do so by reminding the Soviet Government of our close interest in Greek affairs. The Prime Minister accepted Mr. Eden's proposals. (a)

After the withdrawal of Roumania and Bulgaria from the war, the Russians were free to enter Yugoslavia, and Marshal Tito's attitude towards his British patrons became more aggressive.¹ The Soviet Government had already signed a treaty with Czechoslovakia; Hungary was prevented from changing sides only by German control. (b)

The most important peace-feelers from the satellite States at the end of 1942 and at the beginning of 1943 had come from Hungary. The answers given to these Hungarian approaches had been that the British Government was not interested in them and that Hungary could expect neither sympathy nor consideration as long as she continued to fight against the Allies of Great Britain and to assist the Axis. (c)

On February 7, 1943, an approach was made at Istanbul by Professor A. Szentgyorgyi, a former Nobel prizewinner and a well-known figure in Hungary. Professor Szentgyorgyi claimed to be speaking with the approval of a number of representative Hungarians, including the Prime Minister. He said that all political and other organised bodies in Hungary with the exception of the Fascists were willing to accept him as the Prime Minister of a Government to be formed before or during the collapse of the German armies, and even the Hungarian Fascists would tolerate his leadership as a means of avoiding wholesale reprisals. He stated that the help of the Hungarian army could not be relied upon until twenty-five senior officers of German origin or sympathies had been removed, but that the Minister of War was preparing two reliable army corps free from German or Fascist influence and that no Hungarian troops were now being sent to the Russian front. Professor Szentgyorgyi offered his services if the Allies had the intention of re-establishing a Hungary capable of taking a worthy part in the reconstruction of

¹ See Chapter XLII, section (ii).

(a) Tel-Cordite 365 (R14927/2734/7; Churchill Papers/79).
(Churchill Papers/79; R14927/2734/7).

(b) Tel-Gunfire 289

(c) C2652/155/18.

Europe. On assuming power he could 'clean up' the General Staff in a fortnight; he then hoped to be able to offer military assistance to the Allies.

The Foreign Office view was that an early and decisive change of policy in the country was unlikely, but that the general position in Hungary seemed favourable for some slight modification of the rigid attitude which we had hitherto taken. Hungary had kept a greater degree of independence than the other satellites in south-eastern Europe. There was a relatively strong opposition both on the Left and Right, and the leaders had been surprisingly outspoken. The Primate, Cardinal Seregi, had also denounced Nazi conceptions publicly, and the Governor of the National Bank had recently resigned in protest against Hungarian economic concessions to Germany. There had been not unsuccessful efforts in Hungary to moderate the persecution of the Jews, and—in view of the influence of Italy on Hungarian policy—any further weakening of Italy, and especially of the Italian-German connexion, would affect Hungary.

Mr. Eden had therefore suggested that in our propaganda and in response to any serious Hungarian peace-feelers, we should give a general warning that we could have nothing to do with a Government which had joined the Axis and attacked our Allies, and that Hungary would have to make adequate restitution to these Allies. We should, however, also make it clear, in order to dispel Hungarian fears of a new and more far-reaching settlement on the lines of the treaty of Trianon, that we had no wish to see the country torn to pieces or to penalise the Hungarian people for the follies of their Governments. Our attitude and that of our Allies would be influenced by the practical steps taken by the Hungarians themselves to get rid of Axis domination and to hasten the victory of the United Nations.

- (a) Professor Szentgyorgyi was told indirectly that his views had been transmitted and that he might receive a message in due course. No message appears to have been sent, partly owing to the delay in receiving the American and Russian answers to Mr. Eden's despatch of March 10, 1943, and partly because the internal situation in Hungary changed during the three or four months after Professor Szentgyorgyi's approach. To some extent the opposition parties
- (b) lined up behind M. Kallay's Government out of fear that, if this Government disappeared, something much worse would be formed under the Nazi control. There was thus nothing to be gained by responding to any approaches. Towards the end of August, 1943,
- (c) however, a M. Veres, a permanent official of the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, came to Istanbul in order to get into touch with the British diplomatic representatives in Turkey. He said that he

(a) C8239/155/18. (b) C8239/155/18. (c) C9621, 9802, 9870/155/18; C9702/279/18.

was speaking on behalf of a group consisting of the Hungarian Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior, and the Chiefs of the General Staff and of the Political Department of the Foreign Office. This group wished to inform the Allies that Hungary accepted unconditional surrender and was anxious to do everything possible to bring about this surrender as soon as possible. The Hungarian army was prepared to defend the frontiers of the country against the Germans, to give the Allies full access to Hungarian airfields and other military installations and generally to co-operate in facilitating an Allied occupation.

The Hungarian Consul-General at Istanbul confirmed M. Veres's statements. Mr. Sterndale-Bennett saw M. Veres and the Consul-General on August 28. They gave him their personal assurance that the four persons whom they had mentioned represented the real executive power in Hungary and that their plans had the support of the Regent. Sir H. Knatchbull-Hugessen considered that the approach was genuine. The Foreign Office also thought it probable that M. Veres had authority for his mission. They therefore regarded it as desirable to maintain the contact with M. Veres and to send him back to Budapest with a message based on the demand for unconditional surrender. The Chiefs of Staff agreed with this proposal. Neither they nor the Foreign Office expected the Hungarians to agree to full capitulation or indeed to any terms likely to bring about a German attack on the country at a time when the Allies could not provide support. Our most important requirement from Hungary would be the denial of transport facilities to the Germans, with the result that the latter would suffer a substantial loss of Roumanian oil, and lose their main supply routes to the Balkans and the south Russian front.

Mr. Eden informed the Soviet and United States Governments (a) of M. Veres's approach and of our proposed reply that (i) we would like to have some more authoritative credentials from the Hungarian Government; (ii) we would expect this Government to make at a suitable moment a public announcement of their acceptance of unconditional surrender; (iii) if the Hungarian Government felt that the time had not yet arrived for such an announcement, they should give evidence of their goodwill to the Allies by ceasing all co-operation with Germany and by carrying out obstructive or delaying action and, possibly, minor sabotage; (iv) if the Hungarian Government accepted these proposals, we would be prepared to discuss ways and means with a Hungarian military representative at Istanbul.

The Soviet Government, when first consulted about this reply, (b) advised that it should be restricted to points (i) and (ii). In reply

(a) C11414/155/18. (b) C10280/331/21.

- (a) Mr. Eden pointed out that it would be a mistake to provoke premature action in Hungary which might lead only to the imposition by
- (b) Germany of a 'super-Quisling' Government. The Soviet Government replied that they continued to think that the inclusion of points (iii) and (iv) was superfluous and that it would be to the advantage of the Allies to act quickly and resolutely, and not to allow either the Germans or the pro-German Hungarian circles to recover from the confusion following the Italian surrender.

- (c) M. Veres returned to Budapest and subsequently reported that he had told the Hungarian Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of his conversations in Istanbul, and that the 'possibilities' had been carefully weighed and the Consul-General at Istanbul recalled to receive instructions. The Hungarians suggested that the contacts should be resumed in Lisbon, but their emissaries had not arrived there at the end of November 1943.

- (d) The group responsible for the approach evidently felt that the defeat of Germany and the arrival of Allied assistance would not take place as soon as they had expected. A proposal for maintaining contact with the group through a secret mission to Budapest came to nothing. The Hungarians themselves were somewhat nervous about it; the Russians disliked it as a British intrusion into a sphere which more directly concerned the Soviet Government. On March 20, 1944, the Germans occupied Hungary, and the possibility of a Hungarian surrender disappeared for the time.¹

Secret (and inconclusive) discussions, however, went on with regard to Hungarian withdrawal from the war. With the Russian advances in the early autumn of 1944, the Regent and the Hungarian Government realised that a Russian occupation was now inevitable, and that their only hope of mitigating the severities of such an occupation and the consequences of falling entirely under Soviet control was an early surrender. As in the case of the Italians a year earlier,

- (e) more than one emissary was sent to open negotiations. The most important envoy was a General Naday,² who had formerly commanded the Hungarian First Army. General Naday came to Italy on September 22 in a Hungarian aeroplane. He told General Wilson that he had the authority of the Regent and the Hungarian Government to sue for peace, and that he realised that there could be no

¹ Shortly before the German occupation of Hungary M. Veres reappeared at Istanbul with a message that the Hungarian Government wanted to explore the possibility of arranging the surrender to the Russians of a number of Hungarian divisions still employed on the eastern front.

² The Foreign Office spelling of this name (Nadoy) is incorrect.

(a) C10408/155/18. (b) C10869/155/18. (c) C13432/155/18. (d) C2125/10/21 (1944); R3322/82/21 (1945). (e) C12693/10, 21 (1944). (f) C3426/254/21 (1944).

question of negotiation. Mr. Eden instructed the British Ambassadors at Washington and Moscow to inform the United States and Soviet Governments of this approach, and to say that General Naday seemed a suitable channel for the presentation of terms. The United States Government agreed, but the Soviet Government told Sir A. Clark Kerr that they did not consider that General Naday had sufficient authority to be regarded as competent to receive armistice terms. On October 6 M. Molotov said to Sir A. Clark Kerr and the (a) United States Ambassador that a few days previously a Hungarian Mission had been allowed to pass through the Red Army's lines and was in Moscow. The Mission had authority from the Regent to conduct negotiations for an armistice and had delivered a personal message from the Regent to Stalin. The Hungarian Government stated that they were willing to join the Russians in fighting the Germans and that they would give the Soviet armies all facilities for free movement in Hungary. They appealed for an early Soviet occupation of Budapest (they later asked to be allowed to send Hungarian military units into the city to protect the 200,000 Jews from massacre by the Germans) and for the cessation of Allied bombing of Hungary. They also put forward a request that Roumanian forces should not cross the frontiers established in 1940.

It was clear that the Russians had regarded General Naday's approach as a Hungarian attempt to bargain with Great Britain and the United States in order to avoid complete control of the country by the Russians, rather than as an offer of surrender to the three Allies. The British and American Governments could therefore hardly oppose negotiations with the delegates in Moscow. Meanwhile the Russians stated that they regarded the Hungarian proposals as unsatisfactory; they suggested replying that the three Allied Governments considered it necessary that Hungarian forces and civilian officials should be withdrawn from Czechoslovak, Yugoslav and Roumanian territories occupied since 1937, and that Hungary should at once declare war on Germany. The Russians would then give them military aid against the Germans. M. Molotov proposed to Sir A. Clark Kerr that British, American and Soviet representatives should expedite matters by preparing armistice terms in Moscow (rather than on the European Advisory Commission in London) and that, if the Hungarian Government accepted the proposals, the negotiations should take place in Moscow. The British and American representatives again found it difficult to object to these proposals, though they would be putting the Soviet Government in an advantageous position to get the terms they wanted. From the British

(a) C13541/10/21 (1944).

point of view opposition to the change was less possible because Mr. Churchill and Mr. Eden were going to Moscow on October 9.¹

The Hungarians accepted the Russian conditions, but on October 16 the Germans carried out a second *coup d'état* at Budapest, and established a new puppet government which denounced the armistice negotiations. The Russians now had to fight their way across Hungary and into Budapest. As they advanced westwards they set up a government at Debrecen under their control. This government (a) signed an armistice in Moscow on January 20, 1945. Under the terms of the armistice the chairman of the Allied Control Commission in Hungary would be a representative of the Soviet armed forces and would decide upon all 'policy directives', i.e. directives involving matters of general principle, during the 'first period' of the armistice, that is to say, until the surrender of Germany. In the 'second period', after the surrender of Germany, the Commission would function on a tripartite basis.

In view of the difficulties which had arisen over the status of the British and American representatives on the Control Commissions for Roumania and Bulgaria,² the Foreign Office took care to secure by an exchange of letters between Mr. Balfour (who acted for the Ambassador as British representative in the Moscow negotiations) and M. Molotov, detailed provisions securing the requirements of the British and American representatives on the Control Commission during the 'first period' of the armistice. On January 21, 1945, Mr. Balfour wrote to M. Molotov that the British Government desired at some later date to reach agreement with the Soviet and United States Governments on the detailed manner in which the Commission should function during the 'second period'.

(vi)

Visit of the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden to Moscow, October 9-18, 1944: discussions during the visit over the extent of British and American participation in the work of the Control Commissions in the satellite States.

The Russian attempts to edge out the British and Americans from their share in the settlement of the satellite States was the more serious because they were also working openly for the establishment of a puppet government in Poland; their cynical attitude towards the Polish revolt in Warsaw had brought a serious crisis with the Western Powers.³ In other matters also the Russians seemed to be

¹ For this visit, and the discussions over the respective shares of 'influence' in the Balkan countries, see below, section (vi).

² See below pp. 151-52.

³ See Chapter XXXIX, section (vi), and Chapter XL, section (i).

(a) R1355/82/21 (1945).

refusing to co-operate with the Western Powers. They were trying to coerce the Iranian Government to grant them exclusive rights to oil concessions in the northern provinces of the country. At the Dumbarton Oaks Conference they had put forward a demand for separate representation, in the new World Organisation, for each of the sixteen constituent republics of the Soviet Union, and were insisting upon a right of veto for the Great Powers in the proposed Security Council.

The temporary arrangement made by the Prime Minister in June for a division of spheres of action in the Balkans now took on a different appearance. The Russians were, in fact, exercising complete control wherever their armies advanced. Owing to the American rejection of the Prime Minister's strategic plans, the Western Allies had deprived themselves of any opportunity which they might possibly have had of sharing in the control of south-eastern Europe outside Greece. The Russians indeed had not as yet begun to impose entirely Communist régimes in the areas under their control, but from their methods in Poland, and from the fact that their supporters everywhere came from the Communist elements, it was difficult to avoid concluding that within a short time they would eliminate non-Communists from the left-wing coalitions.

The Prime Minister was much disturbed at this situation. He regarded it, rightly, as threatening the future of Anglo-Soviet co-operation upon which British post-war policy was being planned. The Americans seemed, as before, unaware of the gravity of the danger, and indeed continued to be more inclined to suspect and criticise British motives in Greece and Italy than to face the possibility of a new Russian imperialism.¹ In addition Mr. Roosevelt was occupied for the time with the Presidential election, and anxious

¹ The Americans were more aware than the Prime Minister tended to think of the danger of giving in to Russian demands. On the other hand, even those Americans in the best position to judge British policy could be over-suspicious. Mr. Winant, who thought that 'the British would be wiser if they sat in with us in working out policy and arrangements with the Russians, rather than attempting bilateral conversations', noted that the primary British purpose in regard to their Bulgarian negotiations was to 'continue their relationship with Greece and to maintain a sufficient degree of control in Yugoslavia to protect British Mediterranean interests'. (*F.R.U.S.*, 1944, III, 452). Mr. Harriman, while American Ambassador in Moscow, wrote to Mr. Hopkins (for the President's notice) on September 10, 1944, a warning that Soviet policy appeared to be 'crystallizing to force us and the British to accept all Soviet policies backed by the strength and prestige of the Red Army'. (*id.* IV, 988-9). A week later Mr. Hull telegraphed to Mr. Harriman his 'serious doubts with regard to future long-range Soviet policy'. Mr. Hull had 'begun to wonder whether Stalin and the Kremlin have determined to reverse their policy of co-operation with their Western Allies apparently decided upon at Moscow and Teheran and to pursue a contrary course'. Mr. Harriman's reply was not altogether pessimistic, but he warned against the danger of letting the Russians have their way in interfering with the internal affairs of other countries. 'Whenever we find that Soviet behaviour offends our standards we should call it forcibly to the attention of the Soviet Government. . . . This will lead to unpleasant situations', but the Soviet Government were likely to 'accede at least to a reasonable degree to our insistent demands'. (*id.* IV, 991 and 992-8).

not to commit himself to any policy which might raise criticism in the United States.¹ Mr. Churchill therefore decided to go to Moscow for an immediate discussion with Stalin. He would try to reach some kind of settlement of the Polish dispute, since this dispute was the most immediate threat to Anglo-Russian relations.² He wanted also to reaffirm his earlier temporary agreement over a division of spheres of action, which would at least secure British control in Greece and a sphere of influence in Bulgaria, Hungary and Yugoslavia. He hoped, by going to the limit of concession, to show Stalin the genuineness of the British desire for co-operation. Moreover, he could feel that he had considerable bargaining power. If the Russians had made great advances in south-eastern Europe the Western Powers had also won remarkable victories. It is clear that at this time among the Russians as well as the Western Powers the view was widely held that a total collapse of Germany and the end of the war in Europe might come before the close of the year.³ The Anglo-American armies crossed the frontier of the Reich on September 11 and the Russians began to realise that, after all, the 'Anglo-Saxons' might reach Berlin before them. In July the Soviet press had begun to contrast the great Russian advances on the eastern front with the small Allied gains in Normandy. The rapid advance of the Allies soon made this kind of criticism ridiculous, and the Soviet press began to emphasise Allied co-operation and the importance of the Anglo-Soviet treaty.

- (a) During the second Quebec Conference the Prime Minister and the President had been considering another conference of heads of Governments, possibly at The Hague, but, owing to the presidential election, Mr. Roosevelt could not leave the United States at the earliest before mid-November. The Prime Minister suggested to Stalin on September 27 that he and Mr. Eden should come to

¹ The President was already alarmed at the public criticism over his acceptance of the Morgenthau plan (see Volume V, Chapter LXIV, section (v)). The facts about this plan had appeared in the American press on September 21.

² See below, Chapter XL.

³ A paper of September 5 by the British Joint Intelligence Committee, following earlier reports on the increasing destruction of German capacity to sustain the war, suggested that 'the process of final military defeat leading to the cessation of organised resistance' might begin in the West, and that although no precise date could be given, the end was likely to come soon. Mr. Churchill did not share this optimism. In a memorandum of September 8 to the Chiefs of Staff he wrote: 'It is at least as likely that Hitler will be fighting on the 1st January [1945] as that he will collapse before then. If he does collapse before then the reasons will be political rather than purely military.' Mr. Churchill's forecast was right. By the end of September, after the failure at Arnhem, it was realised that German resistance was unlikely to disintegrate before the winter. The situation in Italy also seemed to show that the Allies were not strong enough to enforce complete victory at once. The J.I.C. report and Mr. Churchill's memorandum are printed in *Grand Strategy*, V, 399-402.

(a) T1828A'4, Tel. 3217 to Moscow (Prisec; Churchill Papers/434). (b) JIC(44)395(o) (Final; PMM D(o)1/4.)

Moscow in October.¹ In a message of September 29 to the President, the Prime Minister said that 'the two objects' which he and Mr. (a) Eden had in mind were, firstly, 'to clinch his [Stalin's] coming in against Japan, and secondly, to try to effect an amicable settlement with Poland. There are other points too concerning Yugoslavia and Greece which we would also discuss.' The Prime Minister said that he would welcome Mr. Harriman's assistance, and that the President might perhaps send Mr. Stettinius or General Marshall.

President Roosevelt at first did not show much enthusiasm over this meeting. He replied to the Prime Minister on September 30 that (b) he thought Stalin 'at the present time sensitive about any doubt as to his intention to help us in the Orient. At your request I will direct Harriman to give you any assistance that you may desire. It does not appear practicable or advantageous for me to be represented by Stettinius or Marshall.' Stalin answered in a more forth- (c) coming way. He said that he shared the conviction (to which the Prime Minister had referred in his message) that 'firm agreement between the three leading Powers constitutes a true guarantee of future peace. The continuation of our Governments in such a policy in the post-war period as we have achieved it during this great war will, it seems to me, have decisive influence.' Stalin said that he wanted to meet the Prime Minister and the President, but that his doctors had forbidden him to make long journeys. He would welcome a visit from the Prime Minister in Moscow. Sir A. Clark Kerr (d) telegraphed on October 2 that the Russians in fact welcomed the proposal for a visit.

The Prime Minister asked President Roosevelt whether he would (e) tell Stalin that he approved of the visit. The President replied on (f) October 4 more cordially that he understood the reasons why the Prime Minister thought an immediate meeting to be necessary, and that the questions to be discussed were of real interest to the United States. He had therefore asked Mr. Harriman 'to stand by and to participate as [his] observer', and to return to Washington to report on the Conference. The Prime Minister on his side was now some- (g) what guarded. He telegraphed to the President his satisfaction that Mr. Harriman would 'sit in at all principal conferences', but that he was sure the President 'would not wish this to preclude private tête-à-tête' conversation between himself and Stalin or between Mr. Eden and M. Molotov, 'as it is often under such conditions that

¹ Stalin had told the British and United States Ambassadors that he was never well except in Moscow, and that his doctors did not like him to fly.

(a) T1840/4, No. 789, Churchill Papers/434. (b) T1848/4, No. 625, Churchill Papers/434. (c) T1848A/4, Churchill Papers/434. (d) Moscow tel. 2644 (Prisee; Churchill Papers/434). (e) T1872/4, No. 790, Churchill Papers/434. (f) T1881/4, No. 626, Churchill Papers/434. (g) T1891/4, No. 791, Churchill Papers/434.

- (a) the best progress is made'. The President sent a message to Stalin¹ appreciating the Prime Minister's wish for a meeting, but stating his conviction that 'the three of us, and only the three of us can find the solution of the problems still unresolved'. The President therefore regarded the talks between Stalin and the Prime Minister as a preliminary to a tripartite meeting.

The Prime Minister and Mr. Eden reached Moscow on October 9 and left on October 18. The greater part of the discussions were on the Polish question.² The Prime Minister, however, raised once again the question of spheres (and percentages) of predominance in the Balkans at his meeting with Stalin, and before any discussion had taken place about the Bulgarian armistice. The Prime Minister suggested, informally, to Stalin that the Russians might have a 90 per cent predominance in Roumania and Great Britain a 90 per cent predominance in Greece, while Yugoslavia was shared on a 'fifty-fifty basis'. The Prime Minister wrote these figures on a sheet

- (b) of paper, and added 'Hungary 50-50, Bulgaria-Russia 75 per cent'. Stalin made a tick on the paper in blue pencil against the percentage for Roumania and the matter was thus agreed.

- (c) The question was raised again at a meeting of the Foreign Secretaries on October 10.³ M. Molotov asked that the percentage with regard to Hungary should be 75 for the Russians. Mr. Eden said that he would like to think over the suggestion. He then turned to discuss the Bulgarian armistice. He said that if a general agreement could be reached in Moscow on the terms, the European Advisory Commission might consider them and the Allied representatives might meet the Bulgarians in Moscow. In return for this concession on the place of negotiation M. Molotov accepted the British proposal for a 'double signature'. An argument followed about the formula regarding the British and American shares in the activities of the Control Commission after the end of the war with Germany. M. Molotov reverted to the talk about percentages, and asked that the Russians should have a 90 per cent share in Bulgaria. Mr. Eden said that he was not concerned with percentages, but that the British Government wanted a greater share of responsibility than they had in Roumania. M. Molotov then suggested 75 per cent for Bulgaria, Hungary and Yugoslavia. On Mr. Eden's refusal of these figures he proposed 90 per cent. for Bulgaria and 50 per cent for Yugoslavia. Mr. Eden agreed to 75 per cent for Hungary, but insisted on some British participation in Bulgaria. M. Molotov then

¹ Mr. Harriman delivered the message in letters of October 5 to Stalin and M. Molotov.

² See Chapter XL, section (ii).

³ See below, pp. 349-51.

(a) Churchill Papers/434. (b) Churchill Papers/66. (c) Print, Anglo-Soviet Political Conversations at Moscow, October 9-17, 1944.

proposed, as his 'limit' of concession, 75 per cent for Bulgaria and 60 per cent for Yugoslavia. Mr. Eden said that he could not make this suggestion to the Prime Minister who was greatly interested in Yugoslavia. He proposed Hungary, 75 per cent, Bulgaria 80 per cent, Yugoslavia 50 per cent. M. Molotov was willing to agree to 50 per cent for Yugoslavia if the Russian figure for Bulgaria were raised to 90 per cent. Finally, M. Molotov thought that Stalin might agree to 75 per cent for Bulgaria and 60 per cent for Yugoslavia. Mr. Eden repeated that he did not care so much about the figures, but that Great Britain wanted a larger interest in Bulgaria than in Roumania.

In the afternoon of October 11 the Foreign Ministers again met. M. Molotov now suggested 80 per cent for Hungary and Bulgaria, and 50 per cent for Yugoslavia. He meant by his figure for Bulgaria that during the period before the German surrender, the Allied Control Commission would work as in Roumania, that is to say, under Russian control. After the surrender of Germany, British and American representatives would participate directly in the control. This principle was agreed, though, owing to American objections, there was further discussion of the wording. The Russians had already accepted the British condition that before any negotiations took place the Bulgarians should withdraw their troops from Yugoslavia and Greece. There was still considerable bargaining over detail, but before the end of the conference agreement had been reached on the terms of the Bulgarian armistice.

Meanwhile the Prime Minister had come to the conclusion that this rough agreement on a percentage basis might be misunderstood. He drafted, on October 11, a letter to Stalin in which he explained (a) that the percentages were 'no more than a method by which in our thoughts we can see how near we are together, and then decide upon the necessary steps to bring us into full agreement. . . . They would be considered crude, and even callous, if they were exposed to the scrutiny of the Foreign Offices and diplomats all over the world. Therefore they could not be the basis of any public document, certainly not at the present time. They might however be a good guide for the conduct of our affairs.' The Prime Minister went on to say that the broad principle governing Anglo-Russian policy should be 'to let every country have the form of government which its people desire'. We did not wish to force either monarchical or republican institutions on any Balkan State. We had indeed 'certain relations of faithfulness with the Kings of Greece and Yugoslavia'; we wanted to give the countries concerned a fair opportunity of choosing their régimes. We were also concerned with the ideological

(a) Churchill Papers/66.

issue between totalitarianism and the form of government which 'we call free enterprise controlled by universal suffrage'. We were glad that the Soviet Government had declared itself against trying to change by force or Communist propaganda the established systems in the Balkan countries. We could not allow Fascism or Nazism in these countries; in other respects we should not interfere in their internal government. The Prime Minister said that Hitler had tried to 'exploit the fear of an aggressive, proselytising Communism which exists throughout Western Europe'. This fear existed 'in every country because, whatever the merits of our different systems, no country wishes to go through the bloody revolution which will certainly be necessary in nearly every case before so drastic a change could be made in their society'. We felt that the dissolution of the Comintern was a decision by the Soviet Government 'not to interfere in the internal political affairs of other countries. The more this can be established in people's minds, the smoother everything will go.' Finally, after suggesting that the differences of political systems would probably grow less in time, the Prime Minister repeated the 'great desire' of the British people for 'a long, stable friendship and co-operation between our two countries'.

The Prime Minister decided not to send this letter—half appeal, half warning—to Stalin. It is also significant that, since Poland and the Baltic States were not in the area of discussion—that is to say, the Balkans—the Prime Minister made no reference to them, though in each case Stalin had shown that he was far indeed from accepting the principle of non-interference or even the right of independence of small or weak States.¹

- (a) On October 12 the Prime Minister wrote a memorandum on his agreement about the Balkan States. He said that the system of percentages was

'not intended to prescribe the numbers sitting on Commissions for the different Balkan countries, but rather to express the interest and sentiment with which the British and Soviet Governments approach the problems of these countries. . . . It is not intended to be more than a guide, and of course in no way commits the United States, nor does it attempt to set up a rigid system of spheres of interest. It may however, help the United States to see how their two principal Allies feel about these regions when the picture is presented as a whole.'

The Prime Minister explained in general terms how his plan would work out in the case of Greece and Yugoslavia.² He repeated that the

¹ The Prime Minister also omitted any reference to Iran.

² See below, pp. 350-351.

(a) P.M. unnumbered memorandum (Churchill Papers, 66, 7).

arrangement was 'only an interim guide for the immediate war-time future, and will be surveyed by the Great Powers when they meet at the armistice or peace table to make a general settlement of Europe'.

On October 27 the Prime Minister spoke in the House of Commons about his visit to Moscow. He referred hopefully to the negotiations over Poland, and said that British relations with Russia had never been 'more close, intimate, and cordial than they are at the present time'.¹

¹ Mr. Harriman, in a report to Mr. Hull, thought the Moscow conversations had been useful, but he added: 'To give an adequate picture I should explain that frequently both men [Mr. Churchill and Stalin] were talking at the same time and not always on the same subject. When you appreciate also that the two interpreters were attempting to translate what was being said you will realise that a conclusion was not always reached on each point.' *F.R.U.S.*, 1944, IV, 1025-6.

CHAPTER XXXIX

Great Britain and Russo-Polish relations, January–August, 1944

(i)

Polish and Russian public statements, January 5–17, 1944.

- (a) **O**N January 5, 1944, the Polish Government issued a declaration in view of reports that Soviet armed forces had crossed the frontier of Poland. The declaration referred to the continued resistance of the Polish forces and the Polish Underground movement and to the claims which the Poles now rightly made to justice and redress. The first condition of such justice was the 'earliest re-establishment of Polish sovereign administration in the liberated territories of the Republic of Poland and the protection of the lives and property of Polish citizens'. The Polish Government, as 'the only and legal steward and spokesman of the Polish nation, recognised by Poles at home and abroad, as well as by Allied and free Governments', affirmed its right to independence. This right was confirmed by the Atlantic Charter and by international treaties based not on unilateral force but on the free agreement of the parties to them. The Polish nation had shown during the war that it would not recognise solutions imposed by force.

The Polish Government therefore expected that the Soviet Union would respect the rights and interests of the Polish Republic and its citizens. They had instructed the Underground authorities in Poland on October 27, 1943, to continue and intensify their resistance against the German invaders, to avoid all conflicts with the Soviet armies entering Poland, and to enter into co-operation with the Soviet commanders in the event of the resumption of Polish-Soviet relations.

The declaration added that, if a Polish-Soviet agreement such as the Polish Government had declared itself willing to conclude had preceded the crossing of the frontier by Soviet forces, the Polish Underground movement would have been able to co-ordinate its action against the Germans with the Soviet authorities. The Polish Government still considered such an arrangement highly desirable.

- (b) This statement had been shown in draft to the Foreign Office

(a) C380/8/55. (b) C995 8/55.

before it was issued. The Foreign Office had agreed to it as reasonable, with one or two minor changes and one important omission. The original wording had referred to the 'earliest re-establishment of Polish sovereign administration in all the liberated territories of the Republic of Poland'. The Foreign Office considered the use of the word 'all' to be provocative, since it prejudged the frontier question. Under strong pressure the Polish Government had agreed to omit the word.

On the day of the issue of this declaration Mr. Eden gave a copy of (a) the Polish *aide-mémoire* of December 30¹ to the Soviet Ambassador. He told M. Gusev that Stalin had asked at Teheran for a guarantee that the Polish Government in exile would not attack the Soviet partisans, but would urge the Polish Underground movement to fight the Germans. The Polish Government now wanted joint Polish-Soviet military talks with British and American representatives in order to work out the details of an armed rising in Poland which would be timed to fit in with the general requirements of Allied strategy. Mr. Eden hoped shortly to give the Ambassador a detailed plan for a general rising in Poland, and thought that this plan might form a suitable basis for discussion. M. Gusev said that he had no instructions in the matter but would report Mr. Eden's communication to Moscow.

On January 6 Mr. Eden suggested to M. Romer that he and M. Mikolajczyk should go to see the Prime Minister at Marrakesh.² M. Romer told Sir A. Cadogan on January 7 that they would be (b) glad to do so. M. Romer asked whether there was any chance of securing Lwow for Poland, but Sir A. Cadogan had to say that the Russians were unlikely to make any substantial concessions. M. Romer then asked whether it would be possible to leave the area between the 1939 frontier and the Curzon line unsettled (he used the term 'litigieux') during the war. He seemed willing to agree that, if this proposal were accepted, the Polish Government would give a secret assurance to the Soviet Government that they would surrender all or part of the disputed area to the U.S.S.R. if they were asked to do so by the Soviet, British and United States Governments at the peace settlement. He recognised, however, that the Soviet Government might not even make this concession to Polish feeling.

M. Romer put the suggestion forward as his own personal idea;

¹ See Volume II, Chapter XXXV, p. 656.

² The Prime Minister was at this time convalescing at Marrakesh. The Polish Ministers did not go to see him.

(a) C191/8/55. (b) C303/8/55.

Sir A. Cadogan did not know whether in fact the Polish Government would accept it, though it seemed to show that they were beginning to realise that they must make the greatest possible effort to reach agreement with the Russians.

Stalin's own attitude at this time was not very promising. The

- (a) Prime Minister, in a message of January 4 on other matters, had said to Stalin that M. Beneš might help to bring the Poles to reason.
- (b) Stalin replied on January 7 that, 'if one is to judge by the last declaration of the Polish emigrant (*sic*) Government and by other expressions of Polish representatives then, as is apparent, there is no foundation for reckoning on the possibility of bringing these circles to reason. These people are incorrigible.'

The Prime Minister was at this time less sympathetic than the Foreign Office with Polish difficulties in accepting the Russian

- (c) demands. He telegraphed on January 7 to Mr. Eden that he thought of making a public statement that we had never undertaken to defend the existing Polish frontiers, and that the Russians had a right to make sure of their own security. If the Poles did not accept the Russian offer, we should have discharged our obligations, and they would have to settle directly with the Soviet Government. The Prime Minister thought that we ought not to give the Poles the slightest hope of further help or recognition unless they cordially supported the decisions which we and our Soviet Ally had reached. He added: 'Nations who are found incapable of defending their country must accept a reasonable measure of guidance from those who have rescued them and who offer them the prospect of a sure freedom and independence.' The Prime Minister had also sent to the
- (d) Foreign Office a draft message to Stalin in which he repeated that he would do his utmost 'to bring the Poles to reason'. Mr. Eden
- (e) suggested to the Prime Minister that these words might produce an even more unhelpful retort from Stalin and that it might be better to say nothing about the Poles until he (the Prime Minister) had seen them, or at all events that the sentence should be amended to run 'propose to do the utmost to persuade the Poles to accept a solution based on the lines of our conversations in Teheran'. The
- (f) Prime Minister replied that he agreed.¹
- (g) Mr. Eden also telegraphed on January 8 to the Prime Minister that he had seen M. Beneš on his return from a visit to Moscow, and

¹ The Prime Minister said that the message should be despatched as amended, but it does not appear to have been sent.

(a) T15/4, Frozen 1092, Churchill Papers/355. (b) T36/4, Grand 1243 (Churchill Papers/355; C507/8/55). (c) Frozen 1163 (Churchill Papers/355; C953/8/55). (d) Frozen 1204, Churchill Papers/355. (e) Grand 1279 (C507/8/55; Churchill Papers/355). (f) Frozen 1228 (Churchill Papers/355; C507/8/55). (g) Grand 1251 (C508/8/55; Churchill Papers/355).

heard from him Stalin's views on the Polish frontier question. Mr. Eden said that he had asked M. Beneš to speak to M. Mikolajczyk, and that he would see the Ministers on the following day.¹

The next public step on the Russian side, although it showed that a large concession on their part was improbable, did not appear to close the door to a settlement. The Soviet Government issued a (a) declaration on January 11 disputing the Polish declaration of January 5, and asserting that the incorporation of the territories of the Western Ukraine and Western White Russia into the Soviet Union was legally carried out by plebiscite in 1939 and in accordance with justice. The Soviet Government were willing to accept a frontier running approximately along the Curzon line and giving to Poland areas in which the Polish population formed a majority; they would not surrender the Western Ukraine or Western White Russia.

The declaration stated that 'the *émigré* Polish Government, isolated from its people', had proved incapable of establishing friendly relations with the Soviet Union or of organising an active struggle in Poland against the German invaders. On the other hand the concluding sentence was in more friendly terms: 'However, the interests of Poland and of the U.S.S.R. lie in the establishment of solid friendly relations between our countries, and that the people of Poland and the Soviet Union should unite in the struggle against the common external enemy as is demanded by the common cause of all the Allies.' Furthermore, in giving Mr. Balfour a copy of the (b) declaration, M. Molotov said this was the first time in which the

¹ The Prime Minister, who had seen M. Beneš at Marrakesh on January 4, was evidently impressed by his statements, and regarded him as likely to be most useful in bringing about (c) a Russo-Polish agreement. The Foreign Office, in the previous September, had taken a less favourable view of M. Beneš's activities. (See Volume II, p. 598.)

M. Beneš brought with him to Marrakesh a map with pencil marks by Stalin showing the Polish-Soviet frontier line proposed by the Russians. This line gave the Poles the Lomza and Bialystok areas in the north, but did not give them Lwow. For the western frontier of Poland Stalin suggested the line of the Oder with the major part of the Oppeln district of Silesia. The Prime Minister telegraphed to President Roosevelt on January 6: 'This (d) gives the Poles a fine place to live in . . . with 250 miles of seaboard on the Baltic. As soon as I get home I shall go all out with the Polish Government to close with this or something like it, and having closed they must proclaim themselves as ready to accept the duty of guarding the bulwark of the Oder against further German aggression upon Russia . . . This will be their duty to the Powers who will twice have rescued them.' In his message to the President the Prime Minister noted that the Russians were 'quite agreeable to Beneš having his old pre-Munich frontier back, with a slight military adjustment . . . and a little territory to the northward linking them with Russia'. The Prime Minister does not appear to have realised at this time the implication of the Czechoslovak-Russian treaty in the Polish frontier question.

(a) C380/8/55. (b) C409, 536/8/55. (c) Frozen 1104 (Churchill Papers/355; C253 8/55). (d) T26/4, No. 353 (Churchill Papers/535; C406/8/55).

Soviet Government had announced their readiness to make concessions in regard to their 'lawful western frontiers'. Mr. Balfour thought that M. Molotov really believed that he had made an overture of which the British and United States Governments would approve.

- The Foreign Office considered that, in spite of the controversial elements in them, these two statements—Polish and Russian—gave grounds for hoping that an agreement might be reached. They also
- (a) realised that the Polish reply to the Soviet declaration might well be a decisive factor. Hence they advised the Polish Government to make their reply as conciliatory as possible and asked them to show it to the Foreign Office before publication. The Prime Minister, however, continued to feel very strongly that the Poles should accept the frontiers mentioned by Stalin to M. Beneš. He telegraphed
 - (b) again to Mr. Eden on January 12 that he regarded the proposed settlement as a full discharge of our obligations to Poland and that, if the Polish Government refused the offer, he could take no responsibility for the consequences.

- The Foreign Office rejected as too controversial a first draft reply drawn up by the Poles. A second Polish draft was on satisfactory lines with certain exceptions. One of them concerned a sentence to the effect that: 'they (the Polish Government) cannot recognise unilateral decisions or *faits accomplis* or the strength of arguments designed to justify the loss by Poland of about half of her territory and of more than 11 millions of her population'.¹ The Foreign Office pointed out that
- (c) explicit reference to the territory and population which Poland might have to sacrifice would be badly received by the Soviet Government and would deflect press comment in England from the otherwise conciliatory nature of the Polish statement into ethnological, historical and geographical issues of a highly controversial kind. The Polish Government at first insisted that they must refer to the sacrifices which Poland was being called upon to make; they agreed after long argument to omit the words following 'designed to justify' and to substitute the more general term, 'far-reaching territorial demands'.

A second British objection was disposed of without much difficulty. The Foreign Office proposed, and the Poles accepted, the substitution of the words '*all outstanding* questions, the settlement of which should lead to friendly and permanent co-operation between Poland and the Soviet Union' in a sentence originally drafted as follows: 'The Polish Government are approaching the British and United

¹ Italics not in original.

(a) C995/8/55. (b) Frozen 1246 (Churchill Papers/355; C651/8/5); C868/8/55. (c) WM(44)6.1, C.A.

States Governments with a view to securing through their intermediary (*sic*) the discussion by the Polish and Soviet Governments, with the participation of the British and United States Governments, of all the questions the settlement of which should lead to . . .¹

With these changes the Polish statement was issued on January 15. It began by saying that the ceaseless struggle waged, at the heaviest cost, against the Germans by the Polish nation under the direction of the Polish Government was a complete answer to a number of statements in the Soviet declaration of January 11. In their earnest desire, however, to safeguard the solidarity of the United Nations, the Polish Government considered it preferable to refrain from further public discussions. They could not recognise unilateral decisions or *faits accomplis* which had taken place or might take place in the territory of the Polish Republic. They had repeatedly expressed their desire for a Polish-Soviet agreement on terms which would be just and acceptable to both sides. Then followed the statement that the Polish Government were approaching the British and United States Governments, with a view to the opening of discussions.

Mr. Eden showed the Soviet Ambassador a copy of this statement (a) on the evening of January 14. He said that the Polish Government had authorised him to tell the Ambassador that the term 'outstanding questions' included frontier questions. Mr. Eden hoped that the Soviet Government would give the most favourable consideration to the Polish answer. The only condition required by the Poles was British and American participation in the discussions; nothing had been said about the location of the discussions, but the Polish Government would be likely to agree to any place suggested by the Soviet Government.

M. Gusev said the Polish statement did not much advance matters. The Polish Government, for example, did not explain the basis on which they would discuss frontiers. The Soviet Government had made it plain that they regarded the Curzon line as a basis of discussion. Mr. Eden replied that the Polish Government knew the Soviet view, and that they could hardly have said more in their statement. They could not be expected to accept the Curzon line in advance of any discussion. The difficulties of the Polish Government were considerable; nearly all their troops (many of whom were in Italy and would shortly be in action) came from the eastern provinces of Poland.

M. Gusev then asserted that the Soviet Government were not convinced that the Polish Government were 'truly democratic' and anxious for good relations with Russia. Mr. Eden said that he was

¹ Italics not in original.

(a) C684/8/55.

absolutely certain of the sincerity of MM. Mikołajczyk and Romer. Some of the Polish Ministers might resign as a result of the statement, but the statement itself was honestly meant and offered a real opportunity for a settlement.

- (a) The Soviet Government replied to the Polish statement in a communiqué published on January 17. The reply treated the Polish statement as a refusal to accept the Curzon line, and rejected the offer of negotiations on the ground that the Soviet Government could not enter into 'official negotiations with a Government with which diplomatic relations had been severed'. The breaking off of diplomatic relations was the fault of the Polish Government owing to their active participation in the 'slandorous' German campaign over the murders at Katyn. The Soviet Government therefore considered that the present Polish Government had again shown that they did not wish to establish good neighbourly relations with the Soviet Government.
- (b) M. Molotov gave a copy of this document on January 16 to Mr. Balfour, British Chargé d'Affaires at Moscow during Sir A. Clark Kerr's absence on leave. M. Molotov claimed that the Polish Government had left the frontier question 'in the air' because they had not specifically declared their readiness to accept the Curzon line as a basis of discussion. He said that negotiations with the Polish Government could not be opened until diplomatic relations between them and the Soviet Government had been resumed, and that such resumption was impossible until there was an 'improved Polish Government'.
- (c) Mr. Eden spoke strongly to M. Gusev about the Soviet reply; M. Gusev merely defended it by arguments as unconvincing as those of M. Molotov. On January 15 Mr. Hull, after discussion with the President, instructed Mr. Harriman to inform the Soviet Government that the United States hoped for Soviet agreement to the Polish offer to discuss outstanding questions 'presumably on the basis of a renewal of official relations between the two Governments. The effect of any hesitancy or refusal by the Soviet Government at this time would adversely affect the cause of general international co-operation.' If the Soviet Government so wished, the United States would be glad to assist in arranging the initiation of Soviet-Polish discussions with a view to the resumption of official relations between their two countries.¹

¹ *F.R.U.S.*, 1944, III, 1228.

(a) C995/8/55. (b) C672/8/55. (c) C736/8/55.

(ii)

British attempts to secure a settlement: the Prime Minister's message of January 28 to Stalin: Stalin's reply of February 2: discussions with the Polish Ministers, February 6-20, 1944.

On January 20 the Prime Minister received M. Mikolajczyk, (a) M. Romer and Count Raczynski. Mr. Eden and Sir A. Cadogan were also present at the meeting. A few days earlier M. Mikolajczyk had written to Mr. Eden to say that, according to information from the Commander of the Polish Underground Army, the Russians had issued an order that all Polish Underground detachments were to be disarmed. In one instance at least a Polish detachment had already been disarmed, and some of the officers shot.

At the meeting with the Polish Ministers the Prime Minister put the case for acceptance of the Russian proposals for the eastern frontier of Poland with the proposed compensation in the west up to the Oder line. The Prime Minister thought that this solution was a fair one, and that it offered Poland valuable territory in exchange for a region which included the Pripet marshes. He said that the United Nations would ensure that all unwanted Germans were removed from the territory transferred to Poland and that Germany would be mutilated and disarmed to an extent which would make it impossible for her to commit further aggression against Poland. On the other hand neither Great Britain nor the United States would go to war with the U.S.S.R. over the Polish eastern frontier.

M. Mikolajczyk said it was difficult for the Polish Government to accept in advance the Russian demand. The territorial changes required of them would mean a large-scale transfer of population, involving difficulty and suffering for the people concerned. The Prime Minister repeated his view that there was in fact little room for negotiation. He thought that the Russians had certain rights in the matter, since they had contributed in the two wars a great deal towards the rebuilding of a strong and independent Poland. M. Mikolajczyk said that the Poles were afraid of getting little or nothing in the west after giving up their eastern territories. The Prime Minister replied that the two questions were linked together, and that if the Polish Government did not receive compensation in the west, they would not be bound by their agreement about the eastern frontier.

The Prime Minister told M. Mikolajczyk that he proposed to send a telegram to Stalin informing him of what he had just said and what would be the British attitude at the Peace Conference. He hoped that M. Mikolajczyk would allow him to say that the Polish Government

(a) WM(44)7.2 C.A.; WP(44)48; C1238, 1366/8/55.

were willing to open discussions on the basis of the Curzon line with compensation in the west. In this event the Prime Minister would protest strongly against the Soviet tendency to call in question the authority of the Polish Government. If negotiations could be opened, there was a chance that diplomatic relations might be resumed. Otherwise Poland would be exposed to Russian anger.

M. Mikolajczyk said that he would consult his Government. He also suggested that the most pressing problem was to secure agreement with the Russians on co-operation between the Russian forces and the Polish Underground movement. The Prime Minister said that he would include this question in his message to Stalin.

- (a) Three days later the Polish Ambassador wrote to Mr. Eden on behalf of the Polish Government asking a number of questions. The Polish Government wished to know what measures the British Government would take in the event of a Polish-Soviet settlement on the lines suggested by the Prime Minister. Could we, for example, secure that the Polish Government and authorities appointed by them would take over the administration of Polish territory as it was freed from German occupation? Could we secure Soviet agreement to the participation of Polish and Allied contingents on an equal footing and in comparable numbers if the occupation of Polish territory were necessary in the course of operations against Germany, and were we able to give an undertaking that the territory would be evacuated as soon as the military operations had come to an end?

The Polish Government also wished to know whether they were right in expecting a formal guarantee by Great Britain and, if possible, by the United States, of the territorial integrity of Poland within her new frontiers and of Polish political independence and freedom from interference in internal affairs. Could the Polish Government be assured that no one of the three Great Powers at the Teheran Conference would claim the right to establish bases on Polish territory? The Polish Government also wanted assurances that the cession of the new territories would be final, and that the Germans would be compelled to admit into German territory the entire German-speaking population of these territories. Finally the Polish Government asked for the views of the British Government on the means by which they could ensure the proper protection and repatriation of Polish citizens in the U.S.S.R. or on territories under Soviet authority.

- (b) The Foreign Office had been inclined to suspect during these January discussions that—as the Poles alleged—the real aim of the

(a) C1059/8/55. (b) C952/8/55.

Russians was to set up a Polish Government which would give them full control of Polish territory up to the German frontier. Mr. Balfour telegraphed from Moscow on January 23 that the Soviet (a) Government had excised a phrase from the report of a British journalist in Moscow to the effect that, if the Poles had accepted the Curzon line as a basis of discussion, the Russians would have agreed to open negotiations. Mr. Balfour thought that this decision brought out even more clearly the real Soviet intention to secure a reconstituted Polish Government. This view was reinforced by M. Molotov's (b) reply to the American message.¹ M. Molotov repeated the familiar Russian arguments, and stated that conditions for mediation would not exist until the Polish Government were changed by the exclusion of pro-Fascist imperialist elements and the inclusion of democratic elements.

The War Cabinet discussed the position on January 25. The Prime (c) Minister described the whole problem as extremely difficult. The Poles had not been willing to go far in concessions. We had also to face the fact that, if we agreed to the cession of the Baltic States to Russia and also to the transfer of large masses of Germans in East Prussia and east of the Oder in order to make room for dispossessed Poles, our action would be challenged as contrary to the Atlantic Charter. We should much prefer to leave a decision about frontiers until after the war, but we could not do so because the Russians were advancing into Poland; if no frontier settlement were reached, they would probably set up a Polish Government in Warsaw based on a plebiscite and having every aspect of democratic and popular foundation, though actually it would be wholly subservient to the U.S.S.R. Furthermore we could not ignore the fact that only Russian sacrifice and victories held out any prospect of the restoration of Poland. The Prime Minister thought that it would be in the Polish interest to accept the Curzon line.

Mr. Eden stated the Foreign Office view that there were increasing signs of a stiffening of the Russian attitude. The War Cabinet agreed also that a difficult situation would arise if the Poles now gave way to the Russian demands, and the Russians later refused to support the cession of German territory to Poland. On the other hand, if no settlement were reached, the relations between Russia and the Western Powers would be greatly strained, with serious consequences for the future. We had no reason to suppose that the Russians would not keep to an arrangement which they now accepted, or that they would break a treaty, or that they did not want to co-operate with us and with the United States. The position would be easier if the

¹ See above, p. 160.

(a) C1013/8/55. (b) C1241/8/55. (c) WM(44) 11.1, C.A.

Poles could secure Lwow, but, although Lwow was a Polish city, and of industrial as well as traditional importance to Poland, the surrounding country was predominantly Ukrainian. Furthermore, if the Poles secured Danzig, they would not lose on the exchange.

- (a) The War Cabinet agreed that a message from the Prime Minister to Stalin would be the best approach. The Prime Minister therefore
- (b) sent a message on the lines decided at the Cabinet meeting. He gave an account of his discussion with the Polish Ministers. He said that he had told the Ministers that the security of the Russian frontiers against Germany was a matter of high consequence to the British Government and that we should certainly support the Soviet Union in all measures which we considered necessary to that end. Russia had endured two German invasions at very heavy cost and, although we would have fought on for years 'until something happened to Germany', the liberation of Poland was being achieved mainly by the sacrifices and achievements of the Russian armies. We and the Russians wanted a strong, independent Poland, but we had the right to ask that Poland should be guided to a large extent by us about her frontiers. Mr. Churchill had said to the Poles that he thought that the Soviet Government would agree to the Curzon line, subject to the discussion of ethnographical considerations, and that Poland would receive compensation in the north and west. He had thus made it clear that the Polish Government would not be committed to the acceptance of the Curzon line except 'as part of the general arrangement which gave them the fine compensations to the north and to the west'. Mr. Churchill had not mentioned to the Polish Ministers the Soviet claim to Königsberg. He had told them that we should be willing to guarantee the new Poland against further German attack if the Soviet Union would also do so. We therefore advised the Polish Ministers to accept it and in due course to recommend it to their own people, even though they ran the risk of being repudiated by extremists.

The Prime Minister said that the Polish Ministers had not rejected the proposals. They had asked for time to consider them, and now put to us a number of questions. The Prime Minister repeated these questions in his message. He added that the Poles were also deeply concerned about the relations between their Underground movement and the advancing Soviet armies. The Prime Minister reminded Stalin that we attached great importance to assimilating our action with that of the Russians in the territories which we hoped to liberate. We had taken the Soviet Government into our counsels about our policy in Italy and wanted to treat them in the same way with regard to France and other countries. An agreement in principle

(a) WM(44)12.1, C.A. (b) T163/4 (C1067/8/55; Churchill Papers/355).

on the frontiers of the new Polish State was therefore necessary. Furthermore, although we recognised that the Soviet Government had the right to accord or to refuse recognition to any foreign Government, it seemed to us that the advocacy of changes within such a Government came near to an unjustifiable interference with national sovereignty.

The Prime Minister then stated to Stalin that he had always hoped to postpone discussions of frontier questions until the end of the war. The dangers which had forced us to depart from this principle were formidable and imminent. If, as we hoped, the Soviet armies continued their advance, and a large part of Poland were cleared of the German oppressors, a good relationship would be essential between the Soviet Union and whatever forces could speak for Poland. The creation in Warsaw of another Polish Government different from the Government recognised up to the present, together with disturbances in Poland, would raise issues in Great Britain and the United States detrimental to the close accord between the Great Powers upon which the future of the world depended. Finally the Prime Minister made it clear that his message was not intended as intervention or interference between the Governments of the Soviet Union and of Poland. It was a statement on broad outline of the position of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom in regard to matters in which they felt themselves deeply concerned. The Prime Minister asked what steps Stalin would take to help in the solution of this serious problem. Stalin could count on our good offices.¹

Mr. Eden replied on February 1 to the Polish list of questions that (a) we fully understood the importance of these questions, but that they concerned problems which we alone could not decide since their settlement would have to be agreed between Great Britain and the other Powers concerned, including Poland. We were, however, convinced that such an agreed settlement would provide the best safeguard not only for Poland but for the general maintenance of security throughout Europe. In our proposed approach to the Soviet Government we intended to link up the frontier question with the

¹ The Prime Minister told Stalin that he was sending a copy of this message to President Roosevelt. The President replied on February 8 that he was in general agreement with the Prime Minister, but thought that it might give to the Soviet Government a wrong impression that the British Government was opposed to any change in the personnel of the Polish Government in exile, (which the Russians regarded as containing elements irrevocably hostile to the U.S.S.R.). The President suggested that the Prime Minister might say that the Poles might of their own accord make changes in the government if a solution of the frontier and other questions were likely. *F.R.U.S.*, 1944, III, 1245-6.

(a) C1059/8/55.

questions of the restoration of the legal authorities in liberated territories, the maintenance of Polish strength and independence after the war, and the provision of adequate guarantees against the recurrence of aggression against Poland. Until we knew the views of other Governments on these matters, and, in particular, until we had more definite information about the basis upon which agreement might be reached between the Polish and Soviet Governments, we could not give a final answer to the questions raised in the Ambassador's letter.

- (a) Sir A. Clark Kerr saw Stalin on February 2. Stalin said that he would send a reply to the Prime Minister's message in a day or two. Meanwhile he explained that he wanted the 'Polish Government in exile' to state definitely that they accepted the Curzon line. He would be willing to resume relations with the 'Polish Government in exile' if he were not afraid that he would have to break again with them owing to their press attacks. Stalin insisted that the first thing to do was to reconstruct the Polish Government. He finally agreed to give an answer to the questions raised by the Poles and referred to in the Prime Minister's message. He said that Poland would be free and independent, like Czechoslovakia, after the war and that he would not try to influence either country in regard to the kind of Government to be set up. If Poland wished to ask for a guarantee, the Soviet Government would give it, and would provide all the help the Poles might need in expelling the Germans. All Poles would be free to move out of the regions to be assigned to Russia; the Russians asked that Ukrainians now west of the Curzon line should have the same freedom. The Poles need have no anxiety about their position when the Red Army was in occupation of Poland west of the Curzon line. The Polish Government would be allowed to go back and to establish the broad-based kind of Government which they had in mind. Poland was their country, and they were free to return to it.

Stalin ended by speaking sharply about the way in which the Polish Government managed the Polish Underground movement. If the members of the latter opposed the Russians they would be attacked and disarmed. If they co-operated with the Russians, the Red Army would assist them.

- (b) The Foreign Office thought that Stalin's latest statements increased the chances of a settlement, and that after getting a definite reply from him the Prime Minister might see the Polish Ministers again.
- (c) The reply, which was received on February 5, confirmed the statements made to Sir A. Clark Kerr, though Stalin now insisted upon the cession of the north-east portion of East Prussia including the

(a) C1550, 1551/8/55. (b) C1744/8/55. (c) T215/4 (Churchill Papers/355; C1746/8/55).

port of Königsberg to the Soviet Union. The Foreign Office hoped (a) for a settlement on the lines proposed, and considered that we should give some kind of guarantee, in spite of the American refusal to do so; nevertheless they realised that, in fact, the Russians would get what they wanted at once whereas the Poles would have to wait until the end of the war. Moreover the Poles did not believe that the Russians were sincere. They (the Poles) thought that the Russian decisions had already been taken; that the fate of Poland was sealed, and that the Russian purpose in agreeing to deal with M. Mikolajczyk was to force upon him the responsibility of accepting the Curzon line without an immediate *quid pro quo*. The effect would be a division of opinion between the supporters of M. Mikolajczyk and those of General Sosnkowski, and possibly civil war in Poland between the pro-Russian and anti-Russian Underground movements. The Russians would then set up their own puppet Government when they reached Warsaw.

The Prime Minister and Mr. Eden saw the Polish Ministers again (b) on February 6. The Prime Minister read to the Poles his message to Stalin and the main points of Stalin's answer, including the Russian demand for Königsberg and the East Prussian territory to the east of it. The Prime Minister asked that the Poles should accept the Curzon line, and said that Lwow must be given up. M. Mikolajczyk again made it clear that the Underground leaders had been asked whether they would co-operate with the Russians even if Polish-Soviet relations had not been re-established. The leaders had replied that they were willing to do so. On the frontier question, however, M. Mikolajczyk was unwilling to state in advance his acceptance of the Curzon line, though he suggested the possibility of fixing a demarcation line and leaving the actual frontier to be decided at the end of the war. He told the Prime Minister that he had definite information from Warsaw that the Poles in Poland were determined to maintain the territorial integrity of their country. The Prime Minister said that, in such case, the situation was hopeless. No negotiations would be possible and the Russians would impose their own decisions. M. Mikolajczyk then said that he had been informed that the Communist 'Polish Workers' Party' in Warsaw had set up a 'National Council of the Homeland' in opposition to the Polish Underground movement.¹ He was sure that this move showed the

¹ The formation in Warsaw of this 'National Council of the Homeland' took place in December 1943. On January 30, 1944, a Polish broadcast from a Russian-controlled station described the purpose of the Council, or Committee, as the organisation of national resistance to the Germans; the Polish Government in London were alleged to be 'incapable of carrying out the task'.

(a) C1745/8/55. (b) C1748/8/55.

Russian intentions. Their plan was to set up—before they crossed the Curzon line—a ‘Committee of National Liberation’ composed of pro-Soviet Poles in the U.S.S.R., the United States of America, and, if possible, Great Britain. After they had crossed the Curzon line the Russians would establish a ‘Polish Government’ through the agency of this National Council.

The discussion differed little from those of previous meetings. The Prime Minister argued strongly that the Russian offer was positively advantageous to the Poles. If, however, they rejected it, he would still do his best to settle the frontier question with the Russians, and to secure humane treatment for the Poles. He said that he would draw up another note and show it to the Polish Ministers. If they refused to join in an approach to Stalin, he would take the necessary action himself. The Prime Minister spoke very firmly to the Poles. He said that, if the Russians had not won great victories, Poland ‘would have no future at all’. Poland had taken ‘many wrong turns in her history, and a refusal now might be the most fatal and disastrous of all’. M. Mikolajczyk repeated that he would give the Russian demands more consideration if he thought they were made in good faith, but the scale of their demands was always increasing. He suspected that they were purposely trying to make the Polish Government refuse terms.

- (a) On February 9 Mr. Eden again said in strong words to the Soviet Ambassador that a failure to settle the Polish question would affect the whole field of Anglo-American-Soviet co-operation. We had gone to war on behalf of Poland, and, although we were not committed to the existing Polish frontiers, we were committed to an independent Poland. M. Gusev repeated the charge that the Polish Underground movement had been instructed to attack the Partisans. Mr. Eden denied this charge. He said that the Underground movement had been instructed to attack the Germans, but not to co-operate with the Red Army until the resumption of Polish-Soviet diplomatic relations. Mr. Eden hoped within a few days to be approaching the Soviet Government again and to be able to show clearly that the Polish Government and their Underground movement wanted to co-operate with the Red Army. He also said to M. Gusev that on the Polish side there was a constant fear that the Soviet Government intended to set up a Communist administration in Warsaw. M. Gusev asserted that the Soviet Government had no such intention.

Between the meeting of February 6 with the Polish Ministers and another meeting with them on February 16 the Foreign Office drew

(a) C1868/8/55.

up—on the basis of a draft of February 7 by the Prime Minister—a message for transmission to Stalin. The Prime Minister's draft (a) stated that the Polish Government were aware that the Riga line no longer corresponded with realities, and that they were not themselves unwilling in principle to discuss with their Soviet Allies, as part of a general settlement, the Curzon line subject to possible modifications on racial grounds. They would not make a public declaration in this sense because they would be repudiated not only by a large part of their own people abroad but by the Underground movement in Poland with which they were in constant contact. Moreover, as the territorial compensations which Poland was to receive could not be stated publicly or precisely at once, the arrangement would have an entirely one-sided appearance. In any case the general settlement of Europe could be formally agreed and ratified only at the time of an armistice or peace.

On the other hand the Polish Government realised the necessity of coming to a working agreement with the Soviet Government in view of the advance of the liberating Russian armies. After consultation with their Underground leaders they had therefore issued instructions to all Poles now in arms or about to revolt that they should collaborate with the Soviet forces everywhere in Poland. Any detachments which had previously had friction with the Soviet partisans would be moved to other parts of the country. The Underground leaders had agreed to carry out these orders even if the general question of the Polish frontiers had not been settled as they would desire, and even before the Polish Government had again been recognised by the Soviet Government.

As part of this working arrangement the Polish Government were willing to agree secretly with the Soviet Union upon a line of demarcation corresponding to the Curzon line, and running west of Lwow. The territory east of this line would pass immediately under Soviet jurisdiction; to the west of the line the Polish authorities would function as the Soviet armies advanced. The Prime Minister's draft then referred to Königsberg. The Prime Minister stated his approval of the Russian claim in view of the sacrifices made by Russia in the war—which might be regarded as a continuation of the war of 1914¹—against German aggression. He mentioned the contribution made to the Allied victory on the Marne in 1914 by the Russian advance into East Prussia.

The draft then stated that the Prime Minister had read to the Poles Stalin's 'favourable answers' to the questions put by them to

¹ The Prime Ministers words were: 'all one and as a Thirty Years War from 1914 onwards'.

(a) C1749/8/55.

the British Government. The Polish Ministers wanted to return to Warsaw as soon as possible and to recreate the Polish State and Government on a broad basis and in accordance with the will of the people in the liberated areas. They could not agree to any immediate changes in the Government which might seem to be forced upon them by foreign dictation. They would, however, promise that on the resumption of Polish-Soviet diplomatic relations, they would include in their Government only persons 'fully determined to co-operate with the Soviet Union'. The Prime Minister thought it better that such changes should come about 'naturally, and as a result of further Polish consideration of their interests as a whole'.

The Prime Minister thought that the fact that no immediate resumption of Soviet-Polish diplomatic relations was possible ought not to prevent the tacit acceptance by both parties of the proposed line of demarcation. It might be that the moment for the formal resumption of Soviet-Polish relations would come with the reconstitution of the Polish Government at the time of the liberation of Warsaw. The Prime Minister stated that he had told the Poles that we should support the proposed settlement at the Peace Conference and guarantee it subsequently to the best of our ability. We were also willing to enter into an agreement with the Soviet Government at once in favour of the Curzon line.

The Foreign Office thought that the terms of the proposed arrangement were not sufficiently definite, and that it would be better to try to get Polish consent to a more clear-cut solution on the basis of acceptance of the Curzon line (as drawn west of Lwow), subject to ethnographical adjustments. They also considered that the Poles would be wise to agree at once to certain changes in their Government. In return for these concessions on the Polish side the Russians would allow the Polish Government to return to liberated Poland as a regular Government in diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union and to administer Polish territory west of the Curzon line.

- (a) The Foreign Office view was that we could not easily guarantee any less clear-cut arrangement, since otherwise there would be unlimited scope for charges of bad faith. They also suggested that we need not go out of our way to support the spurious Russian claims to Königsberg, and that we ought to set out in more definite terms our own proposed guarantee.
- (b) The final draft of the Prime Minister's message as amended in accordance with the Foreign Office suggestions opened with a

(a) C2567/8/55. (b) C2021/8/55.

statement of the orders which had been given to the Polish Underground movement and accepted by them for collaboration with the Soviet army on Polish territory. The draft then mentioned the readiness of the Polish Government to declare that the Treaty of Riga was not unalterable and to negotiate a new frontier between Poland and the Soviet Union on the basis of the Curzon line as far as the old Austrian frontier, and a line thence passing west of Lwow to the Carpathians, leaving Przemyśl to Poland; this frontier line would be altered later where necessary 'in the interest of national homogeneity'. The Polish Government were also ready to remove General Sosnkowski from his post as Commander-in-Chief and to obtain the resignation from the Polish Cabinet of two members to whom Stalin objected.¹ The Prime Minister thought it essential (so the draft continued) that these changes of personnel should have the appearance of a spontaneous Polish decision, but the Polish Government had undertaken to carry them out as soon as an agreement had been reached and diplomatic relations were to be resumed with the Soviet Government.

In the agreement thus made with the Polish Government and in accordance with the assurances already received by Stalin the British and Soviet Governments would join in an undertaking (i) to recognise and respect the complete independence of Poland, (ii) to do their best to secure in due course the incorporation in Poland of Danzig, Upper Silesia and East Prussia, west and south of a line running approximately from x to x^2 , and of as much territory up to the Oder as the Polish Government might see fit to accept, (iii) to effect the transfer into Germany of the German population of territories incorporated in Poland, (iv) to recognise the right of all persons who on January 1, 1939, were Polish citizens and habitually resident in the territories east of the new Polish-Soviet frontier to opt for Polish nationality subject to their transferring their residence to Poland, and the right of all persons who on January 1, 1939, were Polish citizens and habitually resident within the new frontiers of Poland to opt for Soviet nationality under similar conditions of transfer.

All these undertakings (other than the changes in the personnel of the Polish Government) would be recorded in a single instrument or exchange of letters. It would, however, be desirable to deal in this instrument somewhat indirectly with the frontier changes. The Polish Government could hardly be expected to recognise formally the sovereignty of the U.S.S.R. over all territories east of the Curzon

¹ These two members were General Kukiel, Minister of National Defence, and Professor Kot, Minister of Information. General Kukiel had been associated with the Polish appeal to the International Red Cross with regard to the Katyn murders.

² No details were inserted here. The Foreign Office had not been informed of any line agreed at Teheran, and, in fact, no line seems to have been agreed.

line before they had obtained the territory which they were to receive in the west. As Stalin had recognised, we did not want to stiffen German resistance by a public statement about the territories which Germany would lose. The Prime Minister therefore suggested that the agreement should be worded as follows:

‘ . . . pending the final demarcation of the new Polish-Soviet frontier the civil administration in liberated territory to the east of the Curzon Line shall be the responsibility of the Soviet Union and liberated Polish territory to the west of the Curzon Line shall be administered by the Polish Government. The Polish Government agree that at the earliest practicable moment and not later than the suspension of hostilities with Germany they will negotiate with the Soviet Government the final settlement of the new Polish-Soviet frontier line.’

Then followed the clause in the original draft referring to the allocation of Lwow to the Soviet Union and Przemysl to Poland.

The draft concluded with a statement by the Prime Minister of the importance of reaching an early settlement in view of the ‘public and parliamentary anxiety’ over the Polish-Soviet question, and the embarrassment which might otherwise be caused to the whole war effort of the United Nations.

- (a) On February 12 Sir O. O’Malley, British Ambassador to the Polish Government, gave to M. Romer the draft text of the Prime Minister’s message. Neither M. Romer nor M. Mikolajczyk would accept the proposed tripartite agreement. The decisive question was that of the frontier. The Polish Ministers said that, as representatives of the Polish people, they could not agree in principle to cede to Russia a third of the territory of the Polish republic. The effect of such a concession would be to destroy the ‘union sacrée’ of the majority of Poles throughout the world. The Polish Ministers were sure that—with or without an agreement—the Russians intended to bring the whole of Poland under their domination; they wished to face this trial as a united people. They did not, however, retract their willingness to declare the frontier laid down in the Treaty of Riga as ‘not unalterable’ and to discuss with the Soviet Government all outstanding questions. Sir O. O’Malley thought that they might accept as the basis of negotiation a line drawn somewhere between the Curzon line and the 1921 frontier.
- (b) In view of the Polish refusal it was impossible for the Prime Minister to send to Stalin his proposed draft as amended in accordance with the Foreign Office suggestions. He therefore decided to go back to his original draft of February 7 with a few minor changes.

(a) C2226/8/55. (b) C1749/8/55. (c) C2168, 2505, 2242/8/55.

This draft was read to the Polish Ministers on February 16 at a meeting with the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden. At this meeting M. Mikolajczyk gave the Prime Minister a short paper defining the Polish attitude, and stating once more that the Polish Government, while ready to discuss frontier questions, could not accept the Curzon line as the future Polish-Soviet boundary, or agree that a decision on the frontiers should be put into effect before the end of the war. They suggested, however, that a line of demarcation running east of Vilna and Lwow should be agreed at once; that the Polish authorities should take over the administration of liberated territories west of this line and that the Soviet military authorities, with the assistance of representatives of other United Nations, should administer the territories east of the line. The Polish Government also stated that the attribution of Königsberg to the Soviet Union would be detrimental to the interests of the Polish State, and that changes in the composition of the Government or in the Supreme Command of the Polish Armed Forces could not be made at the demand of a foreign State.

The Prime Minister and Mr. Eden told the Polish Ministers that there was no chance of the Russians accepting a proposal merely for a line of demarcation. They repeated the arguments brought forward in previous discussions that there was no practical alternative to an acceptance of the Russian demand for the Curzon line. If no settlement were reached, the Russians might set up a puppet Government in Poland, and hold a plebiscite under which the opponents of Soviet plans would be prevented from voting. We could not stop the Russians from marching through Poland. The Prime Minister then read to the Polish Ministers the draft of the message which he now proposed to send to Stalin.

The Prime Minister asked the Polish Ministers to consider this draft, and to let him know on the following day whether they would authorise him to send it with their approval. He admitted that the Russian answer might be negative. In this case there would be serious difficulties between the Soviet Union and Great Britain and the United States. On the other hand the Russian answer might enable us to work out a settlement. At all events the time was most favourable for an approach to them, i.e. while we were preparing to open our second front and before the Russians had occupied the whole of Poland.

The Prime Minister said that, even if the Polish Ministers would not agree to his draft, he would have to make some reply to Stalin. He would then only give him the Polish statement—which would be insufficient—and tell him of the latest instructions to the Polish Underground movement. He would do his best to make things smoother for the Polish population, but he would have to support

the Soviet annexation of all territory, including Lwow, east of the Curzon line, on the understanding that Poland received compensation in the north and west. The Polish Government would then 'drop out of the picture'.

M. Mikolajczyk once more explained his difficulties, and the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden again said that they had not the power to do more for him. They could not stop the Russian advance; it would be useless to make the Russians more angry and to drive them into setting up a puppet Government in Warsaw. The Prime Minister's plan at least gave the chance of a *modus vivendi* and left the Poles free at the peace settlement to argue for modifications of the frontier line. If agreement were now reached on the proposed basis, the Polish Government could return to Warsaw, and, although there would be practical difficulties about sending foreign contingents to Warsaw, the Poles would have the Allied Embassies and all the advantages of being an independent Government. The Prime Minister did not think that Russia would repeat the German desire to dominate all Europe. After the war Great Britain and the United States would maintain strong forces and there were good hopes of the world settling down to a peace of thirty or forty years which might then prove more lasting.

- (a) After considering the Prime Minister's proposals, M. Mikolajczyk, M. Romer and Count Raczynski told Sir O. O'Malley on February 17 that they were in favour of a message to Stalin on the general lines of the draft submitted to them but that the rest of the Polish Cabinet were unwilling to agree to it. M. Mikolajczyk had therefore decided, with the approval of M. Romer and Count Raczynski, that, although he could not put forward the proposals in the name of the Polish Government, he could tell the Soviet Government that he tacitly acquiesced in them and would not later disavow them. He also said that the Polish Government attached great importance to parallel action in Moscow by Mr. Roosevelt.

(iii)

The Prime Minister's message of February 21 to Stalin: Stalin's refusal of the Prime Minister's proposals: further exchange of messages with Stalin: Stalin's message of March 23, 1944.

- (b) The Prime Minister agreed to a certain redrafting of his message to suit the Polish wishes. The message was finally telegraphed to Sir A. Clark Kerr on February 21 for transmission to Stalin. Sir A. Clark Kerr was instructed to say to Stalin, as an additional message, that the telegram had been seen by MM. Mikolajczyk and Romer and

(a) C2505/8/55. (b) T352/4 (Churchill Papers/355; C2461/8/55).

had been drafted in close consultation with them and despatched with their authorisation. The Prime Minister hoped that it would be the means of reaching a working arrangement during the war, and that it would become the foundation of a lasting Soviet-Polish friendship as part of the general European settlement. In its final form the message began with the statement that the Polish Government were ready, with British participation, to discuss with the Soviet Government, as part of the general settlement, a new Polish-Soviet frontier, together with the future frontiers of Poland in the north and west. Since the compensations which Poland would receive in the north and west could not yet be stated publicly or precisely, the Polish Government clearly could not publicly declare their willingness to cede territory, since such a declaration would have a one-sided appearance, and would be repudiated by a large part of the Polish people abroad and by the Underground movement. The Polish territorial settlement must therefore be an integral part of the general territorial settlement of Europe and be agreed formally and ratified at the time of an armistice or peace.

Until they had returned to Polish territory and had been allowed to consult the Polish people, the Polish Government could not formally abdicate their rights over any part of Poland as hitherto constituted, but the vigorous prosecution of the war in collaboration with the Soviet armies would be greatly facilitated if the Soviet Government would allow the return of the Polish Government to the territory of liberated Poland as soon as possible, and, in consultation with their British and American Allies, arrange with the Polish Government for the establishment of the civil administration of the latter in given districts. This procedure would be in general accordance with that to be established in other countries as they were liberated. The Polish Government were very anxious that the district to be placed under Polish civil administration should include such places as Vilna and Lwow, where there were large concentrations of Poles, and that the territories east of the demarcation line should be administered by the Soviet military authorities with the assistance of representatives of the United Nations. They pointed out that they would thus be in the best position to enlist all able-bodied Poles in the war effort.

The Prime Minister, however, had informed the Polish Government that Stalin would not agree to leave Vilna and Lwow under Polish administration. On the other hand the Prime Minister wished to be able to assure the Poles that the area to be placed under Polish civil administration would include at least all Poland west of the Curzon line. At the final frontier negotiations the Polish Government, taking into consideration the mixed character of the population of eastern Poland, would favour a frontier drawn with a view to

assuring the highest degree of homogeneity on both sides, while reducing as much as possible the extent and hardships of an exchange of populations. The Prime Minister had no doubt that these final negotiations would give Stalin what he wanted, but it seemed unnecessary and undesirable publicly to emphasise the matter at the present stage.

The Prime Minister said that the Polish Government wanted a working arrangement with the Soviet Government for the immediate prosecution of the war. They maintained that they had never instructed their Underground movement to attack 'Partisans'. On the contrary, they had ordered, with the consent of their Underground leaders, all Poles in arms or about to revolt to collaborate fully with the Soviet commanders. The Prime Minister's message referred in some detail to the Polish orders to the Underground leaders. He then stated, in the terms of his first draft, his approval of the Soviet claim to Königsberg.

The message next dealt with the composition of the Polish Government. Although the latter could not admit the right of foreign intervention, they were able to assure the Soviet Government that by the time they (the Polish Government) had entered into diplomatic relations with them, they would include in the Polish Cabinet only persons fully determined to co-operate with the Soviet Union. The Prime Minister then repeated the sentences in his draft that the resumption of Polish-Soviet relations might well come at the time of the liberation of Warsaw. Finally he stated his proposals for a tripartite agreement and the willingness of the British Government to support the proposals at the peace conference and to guarantee the settlement to the best of their ability in post-war years.

In giving this message to Stalin Sir A. Clark Kerr was instructed to speak of the public and parliamentary anxiety in Great Britain for a settlement and the necessity to consider the effect upon the Polish forces in action or about to go into action.¹ He could also say

¹ In his statement about the Teheran Conference to the House of Commons on February 22 Mr. Churchill referred to the Polish question in the following terms: 'I took occasion to raise personally with Marshal Stalin the question of the future of Poland. I pointed out that it was in fulfilment of our guarantee to Poland that Great Britain declared war upon Nazi Germany, and that we had never weakened in our resolve, even in the period when we were all alone, and that the fate of the Polish nation holds a prime place in the thoughts and policies of His Majesty's Government and of the British Parliament. It was with great pleasure that I heard from Marshal Stalin that he, too, was resolved upon the creation and maintenance of a strong, integral, independent Poland as one of the leading Powers in Europe. He has several times repeated these declarations in public, and I am convinced that they represent the settled policy of the Soviet Union.'

Here I may remind the House that we ourselves have never in the past guaranteed, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, any particular frontier line to Poland. We did not approve of the Polish occupation of Vilna in 1920. The British view in 1919 stands expressed in the so-called Curzon line which deals, at any rate partially, with the problem. I have always held the opinion that all questions of territorial settlement and readjustment should stand over until the end of the war and that the victorious Powers should then arrive at formal and final agreement governing the articulation of Europe as a whole.

(continued on page 177)

that the Polish Ministers had shown great restraint in refusing to enter into polemics as a result of a bitter and unjustified attack made against them in *Pravda*.¹ They were showing both realism and courage in enabling negotiations to proceed on the present basis, in spite of the contrary views held by large sections of the Polish Government and population in Poland and abroad, and in spite of their own misgivings with regard to the overwhelming power of the Soviet Union. We were unlikely to be able to push the Polish Government any further. A Soviet rejection of their present offer would have a serious effect upon British and American opinion and therefore upon the war effort of the United Nations.

The Prime Minister sent to President Roosevelt a copy of his message to Stalin. The President telegraphed to Stalin that he (a) agreed with the Prime Minister's suggestion for a tentative settlement of the Polish post-war boundary by agreement between the Soviet and Polish Governments and that he hoped that Stalin would give favourable and sympathetic consideration to the proposal.

Stalin's reception of the message was, however, neither favourable nor sympathetic. Sir A. Clark Kerr reported, after an interview on (b) the night of February 28-9, that Stalin had tried to dismiss 'with a snigger' the position of the Polish Government. When Sir A. Clark Kerr spoke of the assurances that the Polish Ministers would not disavow the British action Stalin commented: 'Is that serious? How handsome of them.' He also maintained that it was not clear whether the Polish Government understood that they would have to give up Lwow and Vilna.

(continued)

That is still the wish of His Majesty's Government. However the advance of the Russian armies into Polish regions in which the Polish Underground army is active makes it indispensable that some kind of friendly working agreement should be arrived at to govern the war-time conditions and to enable anti-Hitlerite forces to work together with the greatest advantage against the common foe.

During the last few weeks the Foreign Secretary and I together have laboured with the Polish Government in London with the object of establishing a working arrangement upon which the fighting forces can act, and upon which, I trust, an increasing structure of good will and comradeship may be built between Russians and Poles. I have an intense sympathy with the Poles . . . but I also have sympathy with the Russian standpoint. Twice in our lifetime Russia has been violently assaulted by Germany. Many millions of Russians have been slain and vast tracts of Russian soil devastated as a result of repeated German aggression. Russia has the right of reassurance against future attacks from the west, and we are going all the way with her to see that she gets it, not only by the might of her arms but by the approval and assent of the United Nations. The liberation of Poland may presently be achieved by the Russian armies after the armies have suffered millions of casualties in breaking the German military machine. I cannot feel that the Russian demand for a reassurance about her western frontiers goes beyond the limits of what is reasonable or just. M. Stalin and I also spoke and agreed upon the need for Poland to obtain compensation at the expense of Germany both in the north and the west.' (*Parl. Deb.*, 5th Ser. *H. of C.*, Vol. 397, cols. 697-9.)

¹ This attack on the Polish Government appeared in *Pravda* on February 12. Sir A. Cadogan protested about it to M. Gusev. (c)

(a) T361/4. Roosevelt-Churchill No. 473 (Churchill Papers/355; C2735/8/55).
 (b) C2793/8/55. (c) C2265/74/55.

M. Molotov confused the issue by talking of General Sosnkowski, and, after a long argument, Stalin said that he had little hope of settling the matter on the basis of the Prime Minister's message. He did not think that the Polish Government wanted a settlement. They hoped to embroil us with the Soviet Government, and had already made a rift between the latter and Mr. Eden and might do so later with the Prime Minister. The Poles always made fresh demands; for example, they had the effrontery to ignore the sovereignty of the Soviet Government over their own territory when they proposed that representatives of the United Nations should share in the administration of territory east of the demarcation line.

Sir A. Clark Kerr asked Stalin for his own suggestions. Stalin replied that he wanted only the Curzon line and the reconstruction of the Polish Government. He dismissed the Polish contention that they could not at present accept the Curzon line or that the reconstruction of the Government should await the liberation of Warsaw. He suggested that new men could be found in the United States and Great Britain.

- (a) On March 3 Mr. Harriman, the United States Ambassador, had an interview with Stalin. Stalin showed some impatience when the subject of Poland was raised, and listened with obvious reluctance. He made it clear that he would not deal with the Polish Government until after it had been reconstructed. He said that the Poles were 'fooling' the Prime Minister. If the Polish Government were not remodelled, a new Government would emerge. M. Mikolajczyk had no forces of any consequence in Poland.
- (b) Meanwhile Stalin sent on March 3 a formal reply to the Prime Minister's message. The reply was short. Stalin said that he had studied the detailed account of the Prime Minister's conversations with members of the *émigré* Polish Government and had come more and more to the conclusion that such people were not capable of establishing normal relations with the U.S.S.R. It was sufficient to point out that not only did they not wish to recognise the Curzon line but that they still claimed Lwow and Vilna. As for their designs to place under foreign control the administration of certain Soviet territories, the Soviet Government could not accept such aspirations for discussion since they regarded even the raising of such a question as an insult.
- (c) The Prime Minister telegraphed to President Roosevelt that he found the reply most discouraging and that he saw no reason why M. Mikolajczyk should not now visit the United States.¹ The

¹ For the previous postponement of this visit, see Volume II, p. 656.

(a) C2998/8/55. (b) T452/4 (Churchill Papers/355; C2977/8/55.) (c) T457/4, No. 604 (Churchill Papers/355; C3046/8/55).

Russians might be more careful if they saw that Poland was not entirely without friends. Mr. Eden agreed with the Prime Minister. (a) He wrote that the reply raised 'most disquieting thoughts'. Was the Soviet regime one which would ever co-operate with the West? Was it to our interest to further its aims?

Before Stalin's reply had been received Mr. Eden was considering (b) what the next step should be in the most likely event of an unfavourable answer. We could not let matters just take their course; as an ally both of Poland and of Russia we could not ignore the seriousness of the problem if there should be fighting between Polish and Russian forces after the entry of the latter into Poland. On the other hand we could not have a 'first class row' with Stalin in view of the overriding interests of the United Nations in the war and of our alliance with Russia. We should therefore go on trying for a settlement. We should tell Stalin of our dissatisfaction at his failure to respond helpfully to our proposals and point out to him the impossibility of Anglo-Soviet co-operation under our treaty if so little account were taken of our responsibilities and problems. We should then try to reach an Anglo-Russian agreement accepting the Curzon line as a provisional line of demarcation between the Polish and Soviet zones of administration. In view of Soviet participation in the Control Commission in Italy, and having regard to our special treaty relationships with the Soviet Union and Poland, we could ask that British representatives should be associated with the administrative arrangements west of the Curzon line. We should continue to recognise the Polish Government in London and the question of its reconstruction should be postponed until the liberation of Warsaw.

After discussion with the Prime Minister, the Foreign Office prepared a draft reply for him and also a draft reply and a draft message of instructions to Sir A. Clark Kerr. The War Cabinet considered (c) these drafts on March 6. Their view was that, in spite of the disadvantages of continuing a correspondence which showed signs of becoming acrimonious, we could not acquiesce by silence in the Russian attitude. We had also an obligation to the Poles; we had persuaded them to offer concessions, and ought to protect them against Russian intransigence. In any case we should have to tell the Poles of the Russian attitude, and, if a complete break occurred, give the Polish Government an opportunity of warning the Underground leaders in Poland. The War Cabinet therefore accepted the general terms of the draft reply, and agreed that, after consultation with Mr. Eden, the message and instructions should be despatched.

The message to Stalin, as finally telegraphed on March 7, stated (d)

(a) C3190/8/55. (b) C3190/8/55. (c) WM(44)28.1, C.A. (d) T473/4 (Churchill Papers/355; C3289/8/55).

that the Prime Minister had already made it clear to the Poles that they would not get Lwow or Vilna, and that the references to these places in his earlier message merely suggested a way in which the Poles thought that they could help the common cause. If Stalin considered them as an obstacle to a settlement, he could regard them as withdrawn. Mr. Churchill repeated that his proposals gave the Russians a *de facto* occupation of the Curzon line, and that, if a general Soviet-Polish settlement were reached, the British Government, and doubtless the United States Government, would support it at the armistice or peace conference. Force could achieve much, but force supported by the goodwill of the world could achieve more. The Prime Minister hoped that Stalin would not close the door to a working arrangement with the Poles which would help the common cause during the war and give the Russians all they wanted at the peace. The Prime Minister and the War Cabinet would be very sorry indeed if nothing could be arranged, and if Stalin could have no relations with the Polish Government which we should 'continue to recognise as the Government of the Ally for whom we declared war upon Hitler'. Finally the Prime Minister said that he would do his utmost to prevent a rift between himself and Stalin, and that all his hopes for the future of the world were based upon the friendship and co-operation of the western democracies and Soviet Russia.

In his message to Sir A. Clark Kerr the Prime Minister said that in giving the reply to Stalin he should speak of the likely course of events. We should have to tell the Poles the sense of the Soviet answer. There would be no assurance that it would not therefore become public, and thus cause widespread disappointment here and in the United States. The Prime Minister would also have to state in Parliament his regret that no settlement had been reached. M. Mikolajczyk and his colleagues had been invited by the President to visit the United States. We had been able to secure a postponement of this visit, but could no longer do so. The Polish Ministers would certainly receive a cordial welcome from the President and all American parties, and there would be a strong recrudescence of pro-Polish sentiment.

The Prime Minister did not know what would happen about the Polish Underground movement. The instructions sent to them by the Polish Government were given in anticipation of a friendly settlement. If fighting now broke out between the Underground movement and the Soviet troops, the position would be even more embarrassing. We recognised the Polish Government in London and could not recognise any other Polish Government which might be set up. There would certainly be a controversy over this question, and it would soon be apparent that there was a marked divergence on policy between the U.S.S.R. and the two Western Allies. This would

affect the operations which all three were about to launch in accordance with the Teheran decisions. On the other hand the proposed working arrangement would avoid all these difficulties.

The Prime Minister instructed Sir A. Clark Kerr to emphasise the gravity of a divergence of policy but to avoid any statement which might be taken as a change of policy or a change of heart, let alone a threat. It might be, however, that the Russian treatment of Poland—as indeed Stalin had foreseen in his interview with Sir A. Clark Kerr—would prove to be a touchstone of Russian policy generally and render other more important things more difficult. Sir A. Clark Kerr was told to make it clear that there was no rift between the Prime Minister and Stalin, nor between Stalin and Mr. Eden. The more difficult our affairs of state became, the more important was it for us to preserve and strengthen our personal relationships. Finally the Prime Minister suggested that the worst difficulties might be avoided if, without any formal agreement and without resuming relations with the Poles, the Soviet Government observed the spirit of our proposals.

Sir A. Clark Kerr put forward certain modifications in the message to Stalin and in his own instructions. He suggested that less emphasis should be laid on the use of force, and that we should be more clear about our wish to keep open the possibility of a later settlement, but the Prime Minister, with the full approval of the Foreign Office, decided to make no change.¹ He thought that we should stand firmly on our position, and that 'appeasement' had had 'a good run'. Sir A. Clark Kerr applied at once for an interview with Stalin. No (a) reply was received to this application. On March 12 Sir A. Clark Kerr sent the message to M. Molotov and again asked for an interview.

Four days later Stalin sent a telegram to the Prime Minister (b) complaining of a leakage to the press of his last message. On March 21 the Prime Minister replied that the leakage of which Stalin com- (c) plained was due to information given by the Soviet Embassy in London to American and British press correspondents; in the latter case the Soviet Ambassador had himself supplied the information.² The Prime Minister also said that he would soon have to make a statement to the House of Commons on the Polish position. He would have to say that attempts to secure an arrangement between

¹ The text had also been sent to, and approved by, President Roosevelt. (d)

² Stalin replied to this explanation on March 25 with a denial that M. Gusev was responsible for the leakage, and an offer, on M. Gusev's behalf, of an investigation into the matter. There was, in fact, no doubt about M. Gusev's responsibility, though the War Cabinet decided not to pursue the matter. Further correspondence took place later over the leakage, but was not relevant to the main question of Polish-Soviet relations. (e)

(a) C3312, 3544/8/55. (b) T595/4, Churchill Papers/355. (c) T625/4 (Churchill Papers/355; C5097/8/55.) (d) T479/4, No. 609; T491/4 No. 493, Churchill Papers/355/ (e) T662/4 (Churchill Papers/355; C3985/8/55).

the Soviet and Polish Governments had failed; that we continued to recognise the Polish Government with which we had been in unbroken relationship since the invasion of Poland in 1939; that we now considered that all questions of territorial change must await the Armistice or Peace Conference of the victorious Powers, and that in the meantime we could not recognise any forcible transference of territory. Finally the Prime Minister hoped that the breakdown over the negotiations about Poland would have no adverse effect upon our co-operation in other spheres where the maintenance of our common action was of the greatest consequence.

- (a) On March 19 Sir A. Clark Kerr was able to see M. Molotov. M. Molotov apologised for his inability to arrange an interview with Stalin. The reason was that Stalin 'had decided to divorce himself from politics, which, in the midst of his present military preoccupations, stuck in his teeth'. He was now entirely absorbed in the battle and would be so absorbed as long as it was possible to sustain the present offensive.

Sir A. Clark Kerr did not believe this explanation. He made it clear to M. Molotov that, in view of what he had to say in supplementing the message to Stalin, we should expect a further answer. M. Molotov said that he would tell Stalin. Sir A. Clark Kerr then went over all the points which he had intended to make to Stalin. M. Molotov's only contribution to the discussion—beyond saying that he would repeat it to Stalin—was to describe the Soviet acceptance of the Curzon line as a concession disliked by the Ukrainians and White Russians who wanted to push the frontier further west.

- (b) Stalin replied on March 23 in a long message. He said that the Prime Minister's messages—and especially the statement by Sir A. Clark Kerr—were full of threats concerning the Soviet Union, and that this 'method of threats' was not only incorrect in the mutual relations of Allies but was also harmful and could lead to 'contrary results'. He objected to the description of the Soviet attitude on the frontier question as a policy of force. This description meant that we were now trying to qualify the Curzon line as inequitable and the struggle for it as unjust. Stalin maintained that at Teheran the Prime Minister and the President had agreed that the Soviet claim was just and that the Poles would be 'mad' to refuse it. The Prime Minister was now taking up a contrary view, and was thus breaking the Teheran agreement. If he had continued to stand firmly by this agreement, the dispute with the Polish *émigré* Government would already have been settled. The Soviet Government held to the claims stated at Teheran since they regarded the realisation of the Curzon

(a) C3993/8/55. (b) T656/4 (Churchill Papers/355/3; C4300/8/55.)

line as a manifestation of a policy, not of force but of restoring the legal rights of the Soviet Union to territories which 'even Curzon and the Supreme Council of the Allied Powers recognised in 1919 as being non-Polish'.

Stalin then said that the Prime Minister now considered that the question of the Soviet-Polish frontier would have to be deferred until the summoning of the Armistice Conference. Stalin alleged that there was a misunderstanding of the position. The Soviet Union was not waging war and had no intention of waging war against Poland. They had no dispute with the Polish people and considered themselves an ally of Poland and the Polish people; they were shedding blood for the liberation of Poland from German oppression. Hence it would be strange to speak about an armistice between the U.S.S.R. and Poland. On the other hand the Soviet Government had a dispute with the *émigré* Polish Government which did not reflect the interests of the Polish people or express their hopes. It would be even stranger to identify with Poland this Government in London which was 'torn away' from Poland. Stalin found it difficult to distinguish between the *émigré* Government of Poland and that of Yugoslavia or between certain generals of the Polish *émigré* Government and the Serbian General Mihailović.

Stalin objected to the Prime Minister's proposed statement in the House of Commons that we could not recognise transfers of territory carried out by force. He (Stalin) understood this to mean that the Prime Minister would be representing the Soviet Union as a Power hostile to Poland, and would be denying the emancipatory character of the war of the Soviet Union against German aggression. This statement would be equivalent to an attempt to ascribe to the Soviet Union something which was not the case, and thereby to discredit it. The statement would be taken by the peoples of the Soviet Union and by world opinion as an undeserved insult. The Prime Minister was free to say what he wished in the House of Commons, but if he made the proposed statement, Stalin would consider that he had committed an unjust and unfriendly act towards the Soviet Union. Stalin himself stood for, and would continue to stand for Anglo-Soviet collaboration, but he feared that a continuance of the method of threats and of discrediting the Soviet Union would not conduce to this collaboration.

(iv)

Proposed reply to Stalin's message of March 23, 1944: decision to delay sending the reply: Foreign Office view of the position, May 31: unofficial Russo-Polish discussions in London during May 1944.

The War Cabinet decided on March 27 to delay for about a (a)

(a) WM(44)40.1, C.A.; C5190/8/55.

fortnight the reply to Stalin's message, and meanwhile to send the terms of the proposed reply to President Roosevelt. In the discussion the Prime Minister pointed out that we must subordinate all other considerations to that of winning the war. Stalin obviously disliked the prospect of a public statement in Parliament. There had been no firm agreement at Teheran about the acceptance of the Curzon line, but there was importance in the fact that for the first time the Russians now definitely accepted it as their western boundary. Mr. Eden thought Stalin's reference to an 'unfriendly' act need not be taken in a technical diplomatic sense. We should, however, have to refute the charge that we had gone back on the Teheran agreement, and we should have to tell the Poles fairly soon how matters stood.

- (a) The Foreign Office considered that, in addition to his deliberate or mistaken interpretation of the Prime Minister's messages, Stalin probably expected that our parliamentary statement would be more hostile to the Soviet Union than in fact it need be. They also thought that Stalin was right in his reference to the Teheran discussions and to our agreement in principle to the Curzon line. We were indeed committed, both at Teheran and in our subsequent messages, to the Curzon line as part of a general agreement. It was probably in Polish interests that the Russians should also be committed to the whole settlement, since, if they thought that we were backing out of part of it, they might argue that they were free to demand the Ribbentrop-Molotov line. Stalin had been consistent in asking only for two things, the Curzon line and a reconstitution of the Polish Government. Although we might have doubts about the future, we could not now accuse the Russians of inconsistency or of a breach of faith. In our reply, therefore, we ought to try to make Stalin see that, although we did not intend to go back on our agreement, the important factor was the reaction of public opinion. Indeed, as the Prime Minister had suggested to Stalin, if the Russians, without definite agreement or even without resuming relations with the Poles, nevertheless accepted the spirit of our recent proposals and behaved in Poland according to Stalin's professions of friendship with the Polish people, the worst difficulties would be avoided. From this point of view the present exchanges might at least have done something to improve the eventual Soviet behaviour in Poland.

- The War Cabinet decided that the reply to Stalin's message should be sent in the name of His Majesty's Government and not as a personal message from the Prime Minister. The draft of the text of the reply
- (b) (in the form of instructions to Sir A. Clark Kerr) was also sent by the Prime Minister to the President. Sir A. Clark Kerr was instructed to

(a) C4302/8/55. (b) T695/4, No. 634 (Churchill Papers/355; C4563/8/55).

say to M. Molotov that we did not understand Stalin's references to power politics and threats. The Prime Minister had merely thought it necessary in his messages to say what he would have to do to make the position of the British Government clear to Parliament and the British public if for the present no settlement of the Polish problem could be agreed. He felt that his personal relations with Stalin and Anglo-Soviet relations in general demanded this degree of frankness. It was to be regretted that Stalin should consider such frankness as a threat.

In order to avoid possible misunderstanding the Soviet Government should be informed that the Prime Minister had not gone back in any way upon what he had thought just and reasonable at Teheran, and that the War Cabinet approved his attitude. The Prime Minister had never suggested that the Poles should refuse to accept the Curzon line. He had strongly advised them to accept it. His exchange of messages with Stalin related to what he had been able to do in mediating between the Soviet Government and the Polish Government in London. In his message of February 21, he had explained why a Government in exile found it difficult to agree publicly to the Curzon line in isolation from other important issues concerning the future of Poland which could not be settled at present. The Prime Minister had therefore proposed a working arrangement to get over this difficulty. This was as far as he had been able to persuade the Poles to go, and he had hoped that the proposal might have been considered acceptable to the Soviet Government.

We felt very strongly that it was of the utmost importance to secure a working arrangement, particularly in order to secure the full co-operation of the Polish Underground movement which was controlled by the Polish Government in London. Such co-operation would be of immediate value to the war and a real advantage to future relations between Poland and the U.S.S.R. The Prime Minister and the War Cabinet therefore deeply regretted Stalin's inability to accept the proposals of February 21.

We welcomed Stalin's statement that the Soviet Union considered itself the ally of Poland and the Polish people. The Prime Minister had never intended to suggest that a war was being waged between the Soviet Union and Poland; his reference to the Peace Conference was based upon the fact that all the future territorial arrangements in Europe, and not only the frontiers between enemy States, would eventually require the formal ratification and sanction of the victorious Powers. We should have preferred a *de facto* understanding on this question now, but in view of the Soviet refusal to accept a working arrangement, the formal settlement, as far as we were concerned, must clearly await ratification and agreement at the Peace Conference. Meanwhile we could only maintain the attitude which

we had consistently adopted and publicly stated in regard to the non-recognition of territorial changes effected during the war other than by agreement between the parties concerned.

In the present circumstances we must continue to regard the present Polish Government in London as the legitimate Government of Poland; our relations with this Government had not been interrupted since the German attack on Poland in 1939 which had brought us into the war. Apart from this consideration, the Polish Government controlled important armed forces now fighting with us. These reasons in themselves, together with their control of the Polish Underground movement, were sufficient for our continued recognition of the Polish Government and our co-operation with them.

If, as we now understood, the Soviet Government saw no prospect of further discussion leading to a settlement, we could only withdraw our mediation and announce its failure. In any statement the Prime Minister would make it plain that he had not changed his views on the proper settlement of the question. We had, however, always emphasised the importance of public opinion in the matter, more particularly in Great Britain and the United States. Public opinion would be greatly disappointed at the refusal of the Soviet Government to accept a working arrangement, but the Prime Minister's statement would not be such as to cause adverse reactions in the Soviet Union. As he had previously told Stalin, nothing was further from our intention than to insult or discredit our Soviet Ally.

In sending a copy of this draft message to the President the Prime Minister said that he believed the Soviet bark to be worse than their bite. The Russians did not want to separate themselves from their British and American Allies. Their conduct about Finland had been temperate, and their attitude towards Roumania and Bulgaria seemed helpful. They might watch their step carefully over Poland without saying anything of a reassuring nature to us about it. This might be of great benefit to the Poles in Poland. The Prime Minister thought it would be a good plan for the President to invite M. Mikolajczyk to visit the United States and thus show to the Russians the interest taken by the United States in the fate and future of Poland.

- (a) President Roosevelt replied on April 5 that he agreed with the terms of the message.
- (b) On April 7, the Polish Ambassador called at the Foreign Office to leave a memorandum describing an important and successful contact between the commander of the Polish Underground forces in Volhynia and the commanders of the advancing Soviet forces in that

(a) T724/4, No. 513 (Churchill Papers/355; C4656/8/55). (b) C4959/8/55.

area. The Soviet commander had put forward proposals which involved the regularisation of the position of these Polish Underground units under Soviet command while keeping them under the authority of the Polish authorities in London and Warsaw and maintaining their Polish character. The Polish Underground command and the Polish authorities in London and Warsaw had accepted these proposals; Count Raczynski described them as almost too good to be true. The Polish Government believed that the Soviet authorities had been impressed by the unexpected strength and discipline of the Underground movement; they (the Poles) hoped that similar contacts would be made elsewhere, but they were still nervous. In the new circumstances they asked that we should show to the Russians our interest and approval at what had happened, and that we would now reconsider the Polish proposal, which we had previously rejected, for the appointment of British and American liaison officers with the Underground movement.

The Prime Minister thought that, in view of these improved conditions, M. Mikolajczyk ought to satisfy the Soviet demand for the removal of General Sosnkowski from his command. The Foreign Office, on April 12, doubted whether we should press the Poles to take this step. We could not be sure that Polish-Soviet co-operation would continue. Our information also suggested that the loyalty of the Underground movement was directed as much to General Sosnkowski as to the Polish Government. His retirement might discourage the Polish forces from co-operation with the incoming Soviet armies, and might also affect the Polish corps in Italy. Moreover General Sosnkowski had just instructed the Polish Underground to carry out an important operation designed to cut German communications with Lwow and Przemysl for at least two days. The Poles expected to suffer heavy casualties in this operation which was the more praiseworthy in that it would assist the Russians to enter the disputed city of Lwow. The chances that General Sosnkowski's retirement would bring about a Soviet-Polish *rapprochement* were not sufficient to justify us in facing all the disadvantages which it would entail. What we might do would be to encourage the Poles to reverse the decision of last year under which General Sosnkowski was also President-Designate of Poland in the event of the death of President Raczkiwicz.

The Foreign Office also suggested that the reply to Stalin and the proposed parliamentary statement should now be modified and that we should delay them until the situation became more clear. In view, therefore, of the *de facto* improvement in Soviet-Polish relations, the instructions to Sir A. Clark Kerr constituting a reply to Stalin's message were not sent. It is clear, though no definite reference is made to the fact in the minutes of the War Cabinet, that one reason for the

postponement was the belief that the circumstances would change once again, and the possibility of influencing Soviet opinion would be greater if the Allies succeeded in their plans for a large-scale invasion of northern France. No personal messages on the subject of Poland were therefore exchanged between the Prime Minister and Stalin during May. On May 24 the Prime Minister made a statement in the House of Commons in which he tried to allay Soviet suspicions of our motives in attempting to mediate in the dispute.¹

- (a) At the end of May, and immediately before M. Mikolajczyk's visit to the United States, the Foreign Office considered that the general developments of the Soviet-Polish situation during the past two months had not been discouraging. The worst fears of the Polish Government about the consequences of the entry of Soviet troops on Polish territory had not been realised. There were local incidents, but on the whole the Red Army appeared to have behaved correctly, and to have directed repressive measures more against Ukrainians, who had tended to co-operate with the Germans, than against the Poles. The contacts in Volhynia had to be broken off because German counter-attacks compelled the Poles to withdraw to the west. The Union of Polish Patriots and the Polish Army in the U.S.S.R.² seemed to consist, in general, of patriotic Poles, unwilling to serve merely as instruments of Soviet policy. They disagreed with the Polish Government in London because they regarded it and the Polish Underground forces as primarily anti-Russian, and therefore incapable of establishing with the Soviet Government the friendly relations essential to the future of Poland.

On the other hand the Soviet Government, while wanting in their own interests a strong and independent Poland governed by Poles, did not consider the Poles in Russia capable of forming an acceptable administration. The Soviet Government suspected the views and activities of the *émigré* Poles (especially those in the United States) and would insist on the elimination of anti-Soviet elements (particularly General Sosnkowski) from the London Government. It appeared that General Sosnkowski, while retaining his post as Commander-in-Chief (which was justified by the recent Polish successes in Italy),³ would soon be replaced in his political rôle as successor-designate to the President.

The Soviet Government was trying to weaken the position of the

¹ *Parl. Deb., 5th Ser., H. of C.*, Vol. 400, cols. 778-9.

² See Volume II, p. 624.

³ On May 18, after very heavy fighting, the Polish forces in Italy under General Alexander's command took part in the assault on Monte Cassino and captured the Abbey. In recognition of this outstanding success General Anders, the Commander of the Polish corps engaged, was given a British decoration.

(a) C7698/8/55.

Polish Government and to find Poles prepared to come to terms with them; they had not ruled out the possibility of collaboration with M. Mikolajczyk and other well-disposed members of his Cabinet if they found such collaboration to be the best method of restoring stable conditions in Poland. They were pushing on with the recruiting of Poles into the army of General Berling which was expected to play an important part in liberated Poland. They were also using the so-called National Council formed under Communist auspices in Warsaw¹ to build up their own political support in Poland independent of the Underground movement, but they seemed to have been surprised at the amount of support for the latter.

The Polish Government continued to place their faith in this support. They felt that they could resist what they regarded as excessive Soviet pressure because the Soviet Government would eventually need their collaboration. They claimed that events had justified their refusal to come to terms now over their eastern frontiers, and that they must be equally firm in Polish internal affairs. Nonetheless the more moderate Poles, and especially M. Mikolajczyk, realised the need of reasonable concessions and of getting rid of the irreconcilable elements in the Government without weakening its position with the Polish armed forces and with public opinion in Poland. The main questions at issue remained the future of Vilna and Lwow (more especially the latter) and the maintenance after the war of real Polish independence free from fear of direct or indirect Soviet intervention in Polish affairs. A resumption of our mediation would at present do more harm than good. We and the United States could be of greatest help if we remained in the background and continued to work for conditions favourable to an ultimate settlement.²

An even more important development at this time seemed to suggest the possibility of better Soviet-Polish relations. M. Romer had informed the Foreign Office on March 19 that the Polish Govern- (a) ment had received an intimation that the Soviet Government wished to establish relations with some Pole representing the Polish Government in London.³ The contacts would be unofficial and secret. The Polish Government had it in mind to respond to this approach, but they wished to make it clear that they would agree to nothing

¹ See above, p. 167, note 1.

² A statement of these views was sent to Lord Halifax on June 4 for his information.

³ Mr. Eden did not mention the proposal at the War Cabinet discussions at the end of March and early in April owing to the Polish request for complete secrecy and also to the fact that no actual arrangements had been made for a meeting.

(a) C8860/8/55.

which involved them in a breach with us or with the United States. They had also asked whether we should object to such contacts. Mr. Eden had told M. Romer that we welcomed them.

On May 23 M. Romer told Mr. Eden that the first meeting had taken place. The Russian representative was M. Lebedev, Soviet Minister to the Allied Governments established in London; the Polish representative was M. Grabski, President of the Polish National Council in London. At the meeting M. Lebedev made no proposals but asked what the Poles would suggest with a view to the resumption of diplomatic relations; he appeared to put this question before a discussion of frontiers. The Soviet representative said that he would obtain instructions from Moscow, and the Poles agreed to work out a formula on the two subjects upon which the Russians seemed to wish them to put forward suggestions. The first subject was the Katyn murders and the second the attitude of the anti-Russian elements in the Polish Government. M. Romer thought a satisfactory formula could be found to deal with the Russian requirements on the Katyn issue, though he was disturbed at a specially violent attack on the Polish Government in the *Daily Worker* which usually represented closely the mood of Moscow.

A second meeting was held on May 31. M. Grabski then proposed that M. Mikolajczyk should make a broadcast reaffirming the readiness of the Polish Secret Army to co-operate with the Soviet armies and declaring that German propaganda accusing the Soviet Government of responsibility for the Katyn murders had completely failed in its purpose of weakening the assistance rendered to the Soviet armies by the Polish Secret Army through action against the Germans.

As a counterpart to this Polish broadcast (so M. Grabski's proposal continued) Stalin would issue an order stating that he was entering Polish territory in order to fight with the Polish nation against the Germans. A special delegation headed by the Polish Prime Minister would then go to Moscow to conclude a treaty supplementing the agreement of July 1941, and settling the question of collaboration between the Polish Underground organisation and Secret Army with the Soviet forces. The delegation would also discuss post-war Polish-Soviet relations and the question of territories and population. The resumption of diplomatic relations would take place at the conclusion of the treaty.

In the course of the meeting M. Lebedev agreed that the 1941 agreement had not been abrogated but was only in suspense. He said that he was convinced that diplomatic relations would be resumed and that the Poles need not fear an imposition of Russian authority upon the Allied Polish nation. On the basis of M. Grabski's proposals he suggested a meeting with M. Mikolajczyk. Before this meeting was arranged M. Mikolajczyk received a call from M. Beneš. M.

Beneš explained that he had been asked to communicate the views of the Soviet Government on certain questions which the latter felt it difficult to raise with the Poles. M. Beneš said that the Russians sincerely intended to reach an agreement with M. Mikolajczyk before they resumed their offensive on the eastern front. They recognised that the composition of the Polish Government was an internal affair of the Poles, but they objected to General Sosnkowski, the President, and two other members—M. Kot and General Kukiel—of the Government. The problem of administration in Poland and of co-operation between the Soviet and Polish forces would be settled at once; the frontier problem would be dealt with later. The Union of Polish Patriots and the Polish Communists would be no obstacle to a settlement.

M. Mikolajczyk left for Washington immediately after this conversation and without seeing M. Lebedev. He told the Prime Minister, however, on May 31 that in his view Russian policy towards Poland (a) had passed through one phase of trying to break the spirit of Poland altogether by concentrating on the frontier question. They had then tried to break up the Polish Government by dictating its membership. In view of the strong British opposition to this attempt, they were now trying to split the unity of Polish politicians, parties, soldiers, and people which had hitherto been maintained. If this effort failed, there might be a fourth phase ending in the resumption of Polish-Soviet relations.

(v)

Breakdown of Russo-Polish discussions in London: proposals that M. Mikolajczyk should visit Moscow: further exchange of messages with Stalin: visit of the Polish Ministers to Moscow (June 13–August 14, 1944).

M. Mikolajczyk came back from his American visit on June 14. He (b) was most satisfied with his reception and with President Roosevelt's view of the Polish prospects. The President thought that the Polish frontier should run east of Lwow and Stanislawow, and that Poland should have the whole of East Prussia, including Königsberg, as well as Upper Silesia. He sympathised with the Polish desire for Vilna, and was not altogether without hopes that he might persuade Stalin to give up the Russian claim to it.

The Foreign Office thought that President Roosevelt—not for the first time—was dangerously vague and optimistic. Mr. Churchill, at an interview with M. Mikolajczyk on June 22, repeated his view that there was no chance of retaining Vilna and that the Poles would be wise to surrender Lwow; Danzig would be of much greater value to

(a) C8477/8/55. (b) C8192, 8588/826/55; C8482/8/55.

them than Lwow, and a great deal might be done to make Poland more homogeneous by a transfer of populations. The Prime Minister warned M. Mikolajczyk not to put too much emphasis on some favourable remarks which Stalin had made to the Polish-American Professor Lange whom he had invited to Moscow.¹ The Russian change of attitude might well be due less to a long-term view of Russo-Polish relations than to an immediate wish to get the help of the Polish Underground Army which was turning out to be of more value than they had expected. The Prime Minister also warned the Poles of the great risk of raising their terms when the Russians appeared to be offering concessions.

- (a) M. Mikolajczyk had seen M. Lebedev on June 20. He found that M. Lebedev had no proposals to make, so he told him his own view that before he went to Moscow and before he made any changes in the Polish Cabinet he must get agreement on certain principles of Polish-Soviet collaboration: (i) resumption of diplomatic relations, (ii) a common plan of action for the Polish Secret Army and the Soviet Army, (iii) administrative co-operation between the authorities of the Polish Government in Poland and the incoming Soviet military authorities, (iv) possible frontier changes to be postponed until the end of the war. M. Lebedev said that he would telegraph these proposals to Moscow; he suggested that it would be advisable for changes in the Polish Cabinet to take place before M. Mikolajczyk went to Moscow.

On June 22 M. Mikolajczyk again saw M. Lebedev.² M. Lebedev found no difficulties with regard to the resumption of diplomatic relations or to the Polish-Soviet administrative co-operation on Polish territory. He mentioned the Soviet-Czechoslovak agreement and suggested that Poland would find it advantageous to conclude a similar treaty with the Soviet Union. He asked M. Mikolajczyk, however, to explain his fourth 'principle' more clearly. M. Mikolajczyk explained that the Polish Government could not agree to any diminution of Polish territory, but that they had declared their readiness to discuss the frontier problem as part of the whole question of the future territory of Poland. For the present a demarcation line should be set up, and to the west of this line the administration should

¹ Stalin had invited Professor Lange, a Pole who had gone to the United States in 1937, and a Polish-American Catholic priest, Fr. Stanislaus Orlemanski, to Moscow in March 1944. They reached Moscow at the end of April, and were given reassuring statements about Russian intentions.

² It is not possible to determine from the Foreign Office papers whether this meeting with M. Lebedev took place before or after M. Mikolajczyk's interview with the Prime Minister, but it seems likely that it took place after the meeting with the Prime Minister.

(a) C8836, 8860, 9096, 8:55.

be Polish. In order to ensure the greatest collaboration in the war effort on the part of the Polish nation the demarcation line should leave under Polish administration those territories in which the greatest agglomeration of Poles were to be found. The demarcation line must be treated as separate and different from the future frontier.

Although M. Lebedev made it clear that the Soviet Government in principle still regarded the Curzon line as the only possible frontier, he did not think that this consideration need prejudice further exchanges of view. Up to this stage, indeed, the conversations had been friendly, and even cordial, and M. Lebedev had shown confidence that an agreement would be possible. At a further meeting, however, on June 23, his tone completely changed. He stated that before the resumption of diplomatic relations, the Soviet Government required the resignation of the President, General Sosnkowski, M. Kot and General Kukiel. They also asked for a complete reconstruction of the Polish Government to include representatives of the 'democratic Poles' from Great Britain, the United States and the U.S.S.R., and from the 'National Council' in Warsaw. The Government thus reconstructed would condemn the previous administration for their mistake over Katyn and would accept the Curzon line (leaving Lwow to Russia) as the new frontier. These terms were presented on a 'take it or leave it basis'. M. Mikolajczyk could reply only that in these circumstances he had nothing more to say.

Neither the Polish Ministers nor the Foreign Office could account for this sudden change in the Soviet attitude. The change coincided (a) with the resumption of the Soviet offensive and was clearly the result of instructions from Moscow, possibly as a result of pressure from the supporters of the 'Moscow Poles'.¹ The Foreign Office advised M. Mikolajczyk to continue with conciliatory measures, and, in particular, with the replacement of General Sosnkowski as President-Designate and with the amendment of the Polish Constitution to bring the Commander-in-Chief in theory and in practice under the control of the Government. M. Mikolajczyk told Mr. Eden on (b) June 29 that both these measures were being taken and that he would repeat the instructions to the Underground movement to co-operate with the Soviet forces.

For a time the reports of local co-operation appeared encouraging

¹ On June 23 the Union of Polish Patriots (see Volume II, p.624, n. 1) declared its unwillingness to recognise the Polish Government in London which—so the Union alleged— (c) was based on the 'illegal constitution of 1935'. This charge of illegality had not previously been raised in Soviet or Soviet-sponsored propaganda against the London Government. The Union accepted as the 'real representatives' of the Polish people, the Polish National Council of the Homeland which 'by consolidating all democratic Polish forces in Poland and abroad' was preparing the way for the formation of a Provisional National Government. This declaration of the Union was not made public until July 1.

(a) C3795 61/55. (b) C9097 8.55. (c) C8835, 9676/8/55.

- but there was an increasing probability that, unless the Polish Government took some positive step for a resumption of discussions, the Soviet authorities might merely go ahead with their own policy
- (a) on Poland. On July 11 M. Romer came to the Foreign Office to enquire whether we would propose to the Russians that M. Mikolajczyk might go to Moscow to discuss the whole situation with Stalin. Mr. Eden said that we would consider any proposals likely to help in the improvement of Soviet-Polish relations; unfortunately, however, the Polish Government had not made any of the changes of personnel which the Russians might regard as an indication of the Polish desire to work with them.

The Foreign Office view was that we could not ourselves suggest to the Russians a visit by M. Mikolajczyk to Moscow, but that we could support a suggestion coming from the Poles. The Russians had objected to our intervention in Polish affairs; if we now approached them again without being able to point to an important change in the situation on the Polish side, we should not get a favourable answer. President Roosevelt, after M. Mikolajczyk's visit to the United States, had tried a direct appeal to Stalin, and had been rebuffed.¹ The only course was for M. Mikolajczyk to make the venture himself.

- (b) The Prime Minister agreed with this view. He said that he was willing to support M. Mikolajczyk's approach by sending a message to Stalin, but that he would have to state once more his own opinion that the final settlement of the Soviet-Polish frontier should be the Curzon line. The Foreign Office did not think it necessary for the Prime Minister to say anything about the frontier question. We were not certain whether the Curzon line was in fact the Russians' last word; there was no reason why we ourselves should be adamant about it.
- (c) M. Mikolajczyk came to see the Prime Minister on July 18. He brought with him messages from the Polish Underground leaders fighting at Vilna to the effect that they were afraid that the Russians were intending to liquidate the Polish detachments. He asked whether the Prime Minister would intervene with the Soviet Government. The Prime Minister said that it would be useless for him to do so, and particularly in connexion with Vilna. He thought that the Poles were acting unwisely about Vilna. They had seized the city after the last war against the wishes of the Allies; there was no hope of their

¹ The President had suggested that M. Mikolajczyk should go to Moscow. Stalin had replied that M. Mikolajczyk's views did not suggest that progress would be made in a visit by him.

(a) C9172, 9289/8/55. (b) C9493/8/55. (c) C9865/8/55. (d) T1365/4, Roosevelt-Churchill No. 571 (Churchill Papers/355; C8809/8/55); T1416/4, Roosevelt to Churchill No. 580 (Churchill Papers/355; C9089/8/55).

obtaining it now. They had already missed many opportunities of coming to terms with the Russians; the best plan now was for M. Mikolajczyk to say that he was willing to go to Moscow. M. Mikolajczyk argued that the Poles had done all they could to come to terms with the Soviet Government but that the latter wanted Poland to become one of the Soviet Socialist Republics. The Prime Minister said that he did not believe this to be the Russian intention.

In a message to Stalin on July 20 about the resumption of the (a) Arctic convoys, the Prime Minister referred shortly to the Polish question. He said that he had avoided any discussion of it because he trusted Stalin to come to terms with the Underground movement if it really fought hard against the Germans. He hoped that Stalin would consent to see M. Mikolajczyk if he asked to come to Moscow.

Stalin replied on July 23 that, with the advance of the Soviet (b) troops, who had now occupied Lublin, the question of administration on Polish territory had arisen in a practical form.¹ He repeated that the Russians would not set up their own administration on Polish territory since they did not wish to interfere in the internal affairs of Poland. The Russians had therefore established contact with the Polish Committee of National Liberation recently formed by the Warsaw National Council of the Homeland. The Committee of Liberation intended to undertake the establishment of an administration on Polish territory.

Stalin claimed that the Russians had not found in Poland any other forces capable of setting up an administration. He described the 'so-called Underground organisations' directed by the Polish Government in London as ephemeral and without influence. He did not consider the Committee of National Liberation as the Government of Poland, but it might in due course 'serve as a nucleus for the formation of a Provisional Polish Government out of democratic forces'. Stalin said that, although he would certainly receive M. Mikolajczyk, the latter would do better to address himself to the Committee of National Liberation whose attitude to him would be friendly.

The Russians indeed had already begun to commit themselves by public statements, either directly or through their Communist clients, to the policy laid down in Stalin's message. On July 21 the National Council of the Homeland, in consideration of the entry of Russian troops into Poland, passed a series of 'decrees' by which it assumed supreme authority over the Union of Polish Patriots and the Polish Army in the Soviet Union, proclaimed the fusion of the latter

¹ i.e. the Russians had now crossed the Curzon line. They had refused to acknowledge as 'Polish' the pre-1939 territory of Poland east of the Curzon line.

(a) T1476/4 (Churchill Papers/355; C9699/8/55). (b) T1485/4 (Churchill Papers/355; C9812/8/55).

with the People's Army (which it had begun to form in Poland) and set up a Committee of National Liberation, to take control of the administration of Polish national territory. In a manifesto to the Polish people the new Committee referred to the London Government as 'an illegal and self-styled authority'¹ which had 'hampered the struggle against the Hitlerite invaders' and was 'driving Poland to a new disaster'. The new Committee described its own 'foreign policy' as based on 'a great defensive alliance of Slav nations', and declared that the eastern frontier of Poland should be settled by mutual agreement in accordance with the principle of Polish territory for Poland and White Russian, Ukrainian and Lithuanian territory for Soviet White Russia, Ukraine and Lithuania.

- (a) The official Soviet attitude towards Poland was announced on July 25 in terms similar to those issued when Soviet troops had entered Roumanian territory. The announcement stated that the Soviet Government had no intention of acquiring Polish territory, or of establishing their own administration in the liberated areas of Poland, or of altering the Polish social order. In commenting on this announcement *Pravda* noted that the Soviet Government had decided to recognise the Committee of National Liberation as 'the only lawful temporary organ of executive power'. On July 27 an agreement between the Soviet Government and the Committee of National Liberation was published. According to this agreement, which was similar to the Soviet-Czechoslovak agreement of April 30,² the Soviet Commander-in-Chief was to have supreme authority in all matters relating to the conduct of the war in the zone of military operations, while in the liberated districts outside the zone the Committee would set up an administration 'in conformity with the laws of the Polish Republic'. Meanwhile the Polish Government in London, in a statement of July 24, had described the members of the Committee as usurpers who represented only a Communist minority.

- Stalin's message was given to Mr. Eden by M. Gusev on July 24. On the previous day M. Mikolajczyk made a public reference to his willingness to go to Moscow. Mr. Eden mentioned this reference in (c) his conversation with Mr. Gusev. He said that the important thing was for direct contact to be established between M. Mikolajczyk and

¹ The new Committee claimed full and sole legal authority for itself in virtue of the Polish constitution of 1921, and alleged the London Government drew its authority only from the 'illegal constitution' of 1935.

² This agreement supplemented the Czechoslovak-Soviet Treaty of December 1943. It defined the relations between the Czechoslovak authorities and the Soviet military authorities on the liberation of the country by the Soviet Army. See above, pp. 104-5.

(a) C9792/8/55. (b) C9797/8/55. (c) C9724/8/55.

Stalin, and that it would not be enough for the former merely to see the Polish National Committee. No one could tell what this Committee represented. M. Gusev said that Stalin did not exclude a meeting with M. Mikolajczyk but thought it would be useful for him to see the Committee. Mr. Eden said that we should attach considerable importance to Stalin's statement that he did not intend to recognise this Committee as being in any respect a Polish Government. We and the Americans recognised M. Mikolajczyk's administration as the legal Government of Poland.¹

M. Mikolajczyk at first refused to agree to meet the National Committee. The Prime Minister had described the Poles who were (a) collaborating with the Russians as neither Quislings nor Communists; M. Mikolajczyk, on the other hand, called them nonentities or (b) persons with bad records, and said that they were all Communist agents. He regarded the establishment of the Committee as showing the real Russian intentions and said that little value could be put on their declarations in favour of Polish independence. Finally, however, he agreed to go at once to Moscow, and to take with him M. Romer and M. Grabski.

The Prime Minister therefore telegraphed to Stalin on July 25 (c) that M. Mikolajczyk was leaving London on July 26 and that he wanted a full and friendly conversation with Stalin personally. He was going to Moscow with the full support of all his colleagues in the Polish Government which we continued to recognise. We hoped that all Poles might be united in clearing the Germans from their country and in establishing the free, strong and independent Poland, working in friendship with Russia, which Stalin had declared as his aim.

The Prime Minister also telegraphed to President Roosevelt that it (d) was of the utmost importance that we should not desert the Polish Government in London. The Prime Minister hoped that the President would send a message to Stalin in favour of a united Polish Government. President Roosevelt accepted the Prime Minister's proposal. (e) At Mr. Eden's suggestion, the President also sent a message of encouragement to M. Mikolajczyk and the Prime Minister sent a (f) second message to Stalin on July 27 repeating his hope for a settlement, and pointing out the seriousness of a situation in which the Russians recognised one body of Poles and the Western democracies another body. (g)

¹ At this interview Mr. Eden also spoke to M. Gusev about the treatment of the Polish Underground forces which had taken part in the liberation of Vilna.

(a) WM(44)95.3, C.A. (b) C9814/8/55. (c) T1492/4 (Churchill Papers/355; C9904/8/55)
 (d) T1493/4, No. 735 (Churchill Papers/355; C9904/8/55). (e) T1512/4, No. 590
 (Churchill Papers/355; C10072/8/55). (f) T1521/4, Roosevelt to Churchill No. 592.
 Churchill Papers/355. (g) T1505/4 (Churchill Papers/355; C9957/8/55).

- (a) Stalin's reply to the Prime Minister's messages was received on July 28. He repeated his welcome of the new National Committee of Liberation, and said that he regarded it as a good start in the unification of Poles friendly disposed towards Great Britain, the U.S.S.R. and the United States, and in surmounting the opposition of those Polish elements who were not capable of unification with democratic forces. Stalin agreed about the importance of the Polish question in the common cause of the Allies; for this reason he was prepared to give assistance to all Poles and to mediate in the attainment of an agreement between them. Mr. Churchill, in sending a copy of this message to President Roosevelt, said that it seemed to him 'the best ever received' from Stalin.
- (b) The Polish Ministers saw Stalin and M. Molotov on the night of August 3-4.¹ M. Romer told Sir A. Clark Kerr that the meeting was friendly; there were no recriminations on the Russian side. The Polish Ministers were impressed by Stalin (M. Romer spoke of his 'quiet' and 'wisdom' and his 'apparent willingness' to reach a settlement); they also felt that Stalin was impressed by M. Mikolajczyk.

Stalin began by saying that he was receiving M. Mikolajczyk in order to fulfil his promise to Mr. Churchill; he also hoped that common ground would be reached. The subjects discussed were (i) relations between the Polish armed forces in Poland and the Soviet army, (ii) frontiers, (iii) relations between the Polish Government and the Committee of National Liberation. The Polish Ministers thought that Stalin was ill-informed about the military contribution which the Poles could give. He tended to belittle the Underground forces because they were without aircraft, artillery and tanks; nevertheless he listened carefully to M. Mikolajczyk's exposition and seemed in the end to recognise the value of the Polish forces. He admitted that the Red Army was in touch with them, but deprecated the orders given to them for a general mobilisation. He said that this order would embarrass the Red Army which needed complete quiet in its rear, and that it would prevent people in the liberated areas from settling down to the work of restoration.

The Polish Ministers found Stalin determined upon the Curzon line as the Polish-Soviet frontier. He said that this line had been drawn by a group of completely objective people, not Russian, and that it must be as fair as any frontier could be. M. Grabski argued vehemently and at length that the Poles should be given Vilna and

¹ The Polish Ministers travelled to and from Moscow by way of Teheran.

(a) T1526/4 (Churchill Papers/355; C10073/8/55). (b) C10240/8/55.

Lwow. Stalin listened with good humour, but asserted that with East Prussia (excepting Königsberg) and a frontier on the Oder with Stettin as a port,¹ Poland would be strong and of good size and that Breslau was surely a good exchange for Lwow. He then said that the question of frontiers was not an immediate one, and that it could be dealt with after M. Mikolajczyk had come to terms with the Committee. An agreement with the Committee was the most important thing. Stalin made some remarks about the tendency of all peoples, especially when they had been overrun by the Germans, to move towards the Left. He told M. Mikolajczyk that the finding of common ground with the Committee was a purely Polish affair and that he did not wish to intervene, or indeed to interfere in any internal Polish matters.

M. Mikolajczyk had three meetings with the National Committee (a) of Liberation. One feature of the meetings was the emergence of a M. Bierut, hitherto unknown to the Polish Ministers, who was chairman of the Polish National Council in Warsaw, and claimed to have come very recently from the city.² M. Bierut rejected M. Mikolajczyk's proposals for a new Government of all parties. He asked for the formation of a new Government of eighteen ministers, fourteen of whom were to come from the Committee, and only four (including M. Mikolajczyk as Prime Minister, and M. Grabski) would be drawn from London. President Raczkiewicz would be replaced and the 1935 constitution abolished in favour of the constitution of 1921. M. Mikolajczyk explained the difficulties of a hasty change of President, and argued that he would have to obtain the consent of the British and American Governments to any constitutional change. He also said that the 'Fascist elements' in the 1935 Constitution had been dropped. M. Bierut would not be convinced. M. Mikolajczyk then said that he must go back to consult his colleagues in London.

One of the members of the Committee advised M. Mikolajczyk not (b) to go back to London, but to make sure of getting to Warsaw as soon as the city was liberated. Otherwise the Committee would act without him and set up a Communist Government. M. Mikolajczyk realised the danger, but considered it essential to return for discussions (c) with his colleagues in London. The Foreign Office also thought it better for him to go to Warsaw as soon as possible and, if necessary,

¹ The mention of Stettin took the Poles (and the Foreign Office) by surprise.

² M. 'Bierut' assumed this name and would not disclose his real name to M. Mikolajczyk. He was later identified as a Pole originally named Krasnodewski; 'Bierut' was a combination of the first three letters of each of two other names which he had assumed at earlier stages of his career. He had been imprisoned in Poland as a Communist and a Soviet agent, but was exchanged in 1927 for a Polish agent in the U.S.S.R. He was said to have taken part in the Spanish Civil War and to have worked as a member of the G.P.U. in Prague in 1937.

(a) C10439, 10460/8/55. (b) C10461/8/55. (c) C10461, 10484/8/55.

to leave with them the task of persuading the President of Poland and the Poles in London to accept any arrangement reached with the Committee. M. Mikolajczyk, however, had left Moscow (on August 10) before the Foreign Office telegram to this effect reached him.

- (a) He had seen Stalin again on his last night in Moscow. This second meeting had been even more cordial than the first. In answer to a direct question Stalin gave a definite assurance that he had no intention of 'communising' Poland. He mentioned the need for a Polish-Soviet alliance, but said also that Poland should have alliances with Great Britain, the United States and France.

Stalin had also spoken of Germany. He said that he would do 'everything possible and impossible' to ensure that Germany would be unable to fight a war of revenge. M. Mikolajczyk mentioned that a German officer captured in Normandy had said that Germany would go Communist after the war, and would find in the Communist area of the world an outlet for the German capacity for organisation. To this Stalin replied that Communism was 'no more fit for Germany than a saddle for a cow'.

- (b) Stalin sent a message on August 8 to the Prime Minister about M. Mikolajczyk's visit. He said that M. Mikolajczyk was 'unsatisfactorily' informed about affairs in Poland, but that he did not seem opposed to the finding of ways to unite the Poles. Stalin had not considered it possible to press any decision on the Polish Ministers from London, and had left them to discuss matters with members of the Committee of National Liberation. Although they had not reached agreement, the meetings had been of value in allowing the two parties to exchange opinions, and to state their desire to work together. Stalin hoped that the affair would 'go better in future'.
- (c) The Prime Minister sent a copy of this message to President Roosevelt on August 10 with the comment that Stalin's mood was 'more agreeable than we have sometimes met' and that we should persevere in our efforts. The Prime Minister also replied to Stalin on August 10
- (d) agreeing that an advance had been made, and repeating Stalin's hope that matters would go better in the future.¹
- (e) On August 14 M. Mikolajczyk and M. Romer had a long conversation with Mr. Eden in which they gave their own impression of the meetings. They said that they had been agreeably surprised by their reception and treatment in Moscow and that there seemed

¹ On August 9 the Prime Minister left London for Italy. He returned to England on August 28, and left again for the second Quebec Conference on September 5.

(a) C10483/8/55. (b) T1592/4 (Churchill Papers/355; C10463/8/55). (c) T1593/4, No. 749 (Churchill Papers/355; C10463/8,55). (d) T1603/4 (Churchill Papers/355; C10463/8/55). (e) C10768,8/55.

better prospects of a settlement.¹ It had been arranged that M. Mikolajczyk should communicate with Stalin through M. Lebedev. He had already sent a telegram through this channel about the fighting in Warsaw.² He had left Moscow on the understanding that, after a full discussion in London, he would send an answer to the proposals made by the Polish National Committee. Although he would be negotiating ostensibly with the Committee, the negotiations would really be with Stalin.

M. Mikolajczyk said that it was of primary importance for the Soviet Government to assist the Underground movement now fighting in Warsaw. Mr. Eden explained what we were doing to provide British and American assistance and to influence the Soviet Government. M. Mikolajczyk thought that the Soviet Government were trying to see how far—by working through the National Committee—they could make the Poles fall in with their plans, but they would also be willing, if necessary, to disavow the Committee. The Committee's plans were definitely revolutionary. They claimed that the People's National Council was the sovereign power in Poland, and that it should appoint a Government. This Government would include the members of the Committee, but they offered to serve under M. Mikolajczyk and to give him four places out of about sixteen in the Cabinet.

Stalin had repeated his assurance that he wished Poland to be really independent, and that he did not want to force Communism on the country. He also attached great importance not only to friendly Soviet-Polish relations, but to the maintenance of the Polish alliances with Great Britain and France and of Polish friendship with the United States. M. Mikolajczyk gave Mr. Eden an account of the discussions about the Polish frontier. He had said to Stalin that he realised the necessity of concessions, but that, in the interests of future Soviet-Polish relations, Poland ought not to be made to feel ill-used; the Poles would have this feeling if they alone of the United Nations came out of the war with diminished territory, and if they were forced to give either of the two centres of Polish culture—Vilna and Lwow.

In spite, however, of Stalin's assurances and of his willingness to postpone an agreement about frontiers, M. Mikolajczyk still thought that the Russians wanted to 'pull the strings' in Poland.

¹ On his arrival in Moscow, M. Mikolajczyk had told Mr. Harriman that he was 'now convinced that the Soviet Government intended to communise Poland'. Mr. Harriman said that on the evidence known to him he was satisfied that this was not the Soviet intention. After his conversations in Moscow with Stalin Mr. Harriman reported that M. Mikolajczyk was much more hopeful of the possibility of a settlement, though he still found that the majority of the members of the Committee of Liberation were determined to 'communise' Poland, and to make use of him (Mikolajczyk) for that purpose. *F.R.U.S.* 1944, III, 1302, 1308, 1312-3.

² See below, section (vi).

They could not be sure of a peaceful and industrious Poland in the face of opposition from M. Mikolajczyk and his associates in the country and abroad. Stalin might be slow to accept a settlement and might even try to run Poland through the Liberation Committee and the Red Army. If this plan failed, he would fall back on the kind of administration which M. Mikolajczyk had in mind. He would be more likely to do this if he knew that the British and United States Governments were continuing their full support of the Polish Government in London and did not pretend that the Liberation Committee represented any considerable force.

M. Mikolajczyk's plans for a reconstruction of his Government were to persuade the President to retire and to secure something like a War Cabinet with one member from each political party, including the Communists; the office of Commander-in-Chief would be abolished and all the Polish armies would be united under a Minister of Defence and a Chief of Staff.

Mr. Eden warned M. Mikolajczyk of the danger of being away too long from Moscow, where the Committee would meanwhile have a free hand, and also of the risk that fighting might break out in Poland between the supporters of the Polish Government and of the Committee. M. Mikolajczyk agreed about the need for haste, but said that it would be useless for him to return to Moscow until an arrangement had been reached between himself and Stalin (and the Committee) about the principles upon which his administration would be set up in liberated Poland. He would then go to Warsaw, after the liberation of the city, to meet representatives of every element in Polish political life and to form a new Government of National Unity. The first task of this Government would be to negotiate in Moscow an agreement with the Soviet Government.

(vi)

The Polish rising in Warsaw: Russian refusal to assist the Poles or to allow American aircraft to land on Soviet airfields: British and American protests to the Soviet Government (August 1—September 4, 1944).

The Polish Ministers, in their conversation with Mr. Eden on August 14, had been less hopeful than at Moscow owing to a new and sinister factor in the situation. A general rising had broken out in Warsaw on August 1; the Russian attitude towards this rising very soon showed that little value could be placed on their formal expressions of willingness to co-operate with any Poles other than those who were Communists or completely subservient to Communist direction. Indeed the Polish Government in London, and the Underground leaders in Poland—and also the British Government—could not avoid the conclusion that the Russians were well satisfied to allow the

Polish Underground forces, unaided and alone, to break their strength and to become discredited as well as defeated in a hopeless struggle against the Germans.

The Warsaw rising, in which 40,000 armed men took part, was not an unplanned outbreak. Before the Allied landings in France the (a) Polish authorities had informed the British Chiefs of Staff of their plans for action by the Underground Army. They had said that, if they were unable to arrange co-operation with the Russians, they would wish to co-ordinate their plans to suit Allied military operations in the West. The British Chiefs of Staff told the Polish authorities that we would continue to do what we could to support sabotage activities, but that we were too far away from the field of operations to take responsibility for calling on the Poles to start a general rising throughout Poland, and that such a rising could be effective only if it took place in agreement and co-operation with the Russians.

The Poles nevertheless went on with their plans. They wanted to do something for the liberation of Poland, and to meet the Soviet complaints that they were not taking an active part in the fight against the Germans. On July 26, the Polish Government said once again that everything was ready for a rising in Warsaw; they asked for certain specified forms of British assistance. They were again told that it was not practicable—on operational grounds—for us to meet their requests, and that we must leave to the Polish Commander-in-Chief in Poland the timing of any general rising.

The Russian armies in central Poland were now advancing rapidly. On July 29 they reached the outskirts of Warsaw. On this day Moscow Radio broadcast an appeal from the Union of Polish Patriots to the population of Warsaw calling upon them, as in 1939, to join battle with the Germans, and asserting that the time had come for decisive action, and that by 'direct, active struggle' in the streets and houses of Warsaw the 'moment of final liberation will be hastened, and the lives of our brethren saved'. After his arrival in Moscow M. Mikolajczyk told M. Molotov (on July 31) that before leaving London he had discussed with the Polish military authorities the details of the general rising which was to take place in Warsaw and the need of airborne supplies. He did not mention a date for the rising, since the choice of date had been left for decision by the Polish Commander in Warsaw. In view of the approach of the Soviet armies and of the Soviet broadcast of July 29, the Polish Commander, General Bor-Komorowski, called upon the Poles on August 1 to begin the insurrection.¹

¹ I have not dealt here with the question whether—as the Russians asserted—the Poles had not been instructed to begin the rising at once, or whether—as the Poles asserted—the Russians had definitely asked for an immediate rising and then abandoned their own attack on Warsaw, not because they were unable to carry it out but because they wanted

(continued on page 204)

(a) C11775/1077/55.

The Russians were then only 10 kilometres from Warsaw and the Germans had begun their evacuation. The Polish plan was to cut off the German retreat and facilitate the Russian advance by holding the bridges over the Vistula. General Bor-Komorowski was, however, unable to get into touch with the Soviet military authorities before issuing his orders. M. Mikolajczyk spoke to M. Molotov on August 2 and to Stalin on August 3 about the rising and asked for Russian assistance. Stalin said that he would consider the matter but gave the impression that he thought the rising premature.

- (a) On August 4 the Prime Minister informed Stalin that, at the urgent request of the Polish Underground Army, we were sending what help we could to Warsaw where a Polish revolt against the Germans had broken out and was being met by attack from one and a half German divisions. The Poles had also told us that they were appealing for Russian aid which appeared to be very near. The message ended with the words, 'This may be of help to your operations'.
- (b) Stalin replied to the Prime Minister on August 5 that the information communicated by the Poles to the Prime Minister was 'greatly exaggerated and did not inspire confidence'. He alleged that the Polish *émigrés* were claiming that they had 'all but captured Vilna', whereas in fact the 'Home Army of the Poles' consisted of 'a few detachments which they incorrectly call divisions'. They had neither artillery nor aircraft nor tanks. Stalin could not imagine how such detachments could capture Warsaw, for the defence of which the Germans were using four tank divisions.
- (c) The Foreign Office considered that an answer should be sent to this message pointing out that we had always said publicly that we should help anyone who was fighting the Germans. In accordance with this promise we had sent supplies to Stalin's friends in Yugoslavia and Greece. Neither they nor the French—nor the Russian 'Partisans' of which we used to hear so much—had aircraft or tanks, or, presumably, artillery. The Foreign Office therefore drafted a message for the Prime Minister referring to these facts and expressing

(continued)

the destruction of the Polish Home Army in Warsaw. General Bor-Komorowski (*The Secret Arm*, Gollancz, 1950, 211-13) has stated that the Poles wished to show that—contrary to Russian propaganda—they were in fact fighting the Germans, and that they also wished to liberate Warsaw for themselves, and have a Polish administration in working existence when the Russians entered the city (hence they needed to be in control for twelve hours before the Russian entry). This statement, however, though it shows that the Poles on August 1 expected an immediate Russian advance into the city, does not settle the question whether they were or were not acting on a definite appeal from the Russians. The question is discussed in Ehrman, *Grand Strategy*, V, Chapter IX, section (iii).

(a) T1547/4 (Churchill Papers/352; C11509/1077/55). (b) T1571/4 (Churchill Papers/352; C10704/61/55). (c) C10736/61/55.

disappointment at Stalin's reply. The message said that Mr. Churchill could not judge of the extent of resistance in Warsaw, but that from our reports he was sure that there was armed and active resistance to the Germans and that all classes of the population were taking part in the rising. He asked Stalin to reconsider his decision and added that a deliberate refusal to send assistance would cause serious misunderstanding in Poland and elsewhere. In view, however, of the hopeful result of M. Mikolajczyk's meeting with Stalin, the message was not sent.

At this time the Russian armies were checked in their advance on Warsaw. The Germans claimed on August 6 to have surrounded and annihilated a Soviet armoured force. The insurgents at Warsaw, who had assumed that they would have to hold out only for a short time before the Russians reached the city, were now in a very difficult position, and needed supplies even more urgently.

Apart from the German claims the British authorities had little definite information about the military position outside Warsaw when (a) on August 8 M. Kwapinski, Deputy Polish Prime Minister, came to the Foreign Office to ask Mr. Eden about the possibility of giving some assistance, or at least encouragement, to the Polish forces in the city. M. Kwapinski brought a memorandum containing messages from the Poles to the effect that since the outbreak of the insurrection on August 1 the Soviet Army had done nothing to relieve the German pressure on the Polish Home Army, and that the Polish forces were desperately short of ammunition, and were being attacked by weapons—armour, air force, artillery, flame-throwers—which they did not themselves possess. The memorandum also stated that elsewhere in Poland the Soviet authorities were disarming the units of the Polish Home Army as soon as military operations were over, and that they were arresting and even shooting the Polish regional and district delegates. M. Kwapinski asked that the British Government should issue a declaration recognising the Polish Underground Army as entitled to the rights of regular belligerents.

Mr. Eden enquired whether the general rising in Warsaw had been co-ordinated with the Russian authorities. He said that we had not been given any precise advance information about it. M. Kwapinski replied that we had been told that the Underground Army had received orders to be ready for an instant rising on July 27, but that the precise moment had been left to the discretion of the Polish Commander in Warsaw. We had also been asked urgently to send technical help of all kinds to Warsaw and to arrange that Polish paratroops should be dropped and certain Polish air squadrons landed there. These facts showed that we had been given

(a) C10466/131/55.

adequate notice of what was about to happen.¹ As for the Russians, the Poles had done their best through every channel open to them, but without success, to arrange complete co-ordination. Furthermore the Soviet Government had been calling every day for months past for a general rising of all Poles against the Germans; the rising had now taken place, yet the Russians were giving no help.

Mr. Eden said that it would be premature to assume an absence of goodwill on the part of the Soviet Government. The facts seemed to be that the Soviet army outside Warsaw had met with a check. Mr. Eden also explained that we had been most anxious to send further technical supplies to Warsaw, but that there were great operational difficulties. On the question of the recognition of belligerent rights Mr. Eden thought that a purely British declaration would have no value, and was likely to be misinterpreted by the Russians; we should, however, be willing to join the Russians in a public statement.

- At his final interview with M. Mikolajczyk on August 9 Stalin promised that Russian help would be sent to Warsaw. He said that arrangements must be made at once for a Soviet officer to be dropped at Polish headquarters with cyphers and a wireless set for establishing communications. Directions for the reception of this officer were telegraphed on August 10 from London for the information of the Soviet authorities. The officer appears to have been dropped by parachute at some time between August 10 and 14; Stalin said that he had been killed.² The Soviet authorities did not make a second attempt to establish direct liaison with the Poles. Meanwhile on
- (a) August 11 and 12 further messages were received in London from Warsaw asking most urgently for assistance. These messages were
 - (b) transmitted to the Soviet authorities. In his message of August 10³ to Stalin the Prime Minister referred to the attempt of Polish airmen—flying from Bari—to drop ammunition over Warsaw.⁴ The Prime

¹ Count Raczynski repeated these facts in a letter of August 16 to Sir O. Sargent. The (c) Foreign Office agreed that there had been consultation before the Polish rising, but said that we had not committed ourselves to any specific form of assistance.

² According to M. Mikolajczyk (*The Pattern of Soviet Domination* (Sampson Low, Marston & Co., 1948), 86) this version was untrue; two Russian officers arrived in Warsaw, and were received by the Polish command. M. Mikolajczyk may have confused the dropping of a single officer about August 12 with the dropping of two officers about (d) September 20. A message from a third Russian officer—a Captain Kalugin—who had made his way into Warsaw on August 3 reached London on August 5, and was forwarded to Stalin. This officer praised the Polish resistance and explained the need for arms.

³ See above p. 200.

⁴ On receiving the Polish appeal for assistance to the Warsaw rising the Chiefs of Staff consulted Air Marshal Slessor, Deputy Air Commander-in-Chief in the Mediterranean, about the possibility of sending aircraft from Italy to drop supplies. He replied on August 4 that he regarded the operation as likely to achieve very little, and to result in heavy (continued on page 207)

(a) C10518/131/55. (b) T1603/4 (Churchill Papers/355). (c) C10819/61/55.
C 10463/8/55. (d) C10687/61/55. (e) C10610/61/55.

Minister said that he was glad to learn that the Soviet authorities were sending supplies, and that we warmly welcomed any help which the Russians could give.

On August 12 the Poles in Warsaw appealed to the Prime Minister (a) and to President Roosevelt for aid. The Prime Minister telegraphed from Italy to the Foreign Office on August 14 to draft a reply to the (b) Polish appeals on the lines that we were doing what we could within the limitations imposed by our other commitments, and that he (the Prime Minister) had sent a message to Stalin asking for Russian help.¹ The Prime Minister also suggested that Mr. Eden should send (c) a message to Stalin through M. Molotov (as a more impersonal way of approach than a direct message from the Prime Minister himself to Stalin) drawing attention to the unfortunate consequences which would follow a belief that the Russians had deserted the Poles in Warsaw.

On August 15, therefore, Sir A. Clark Kerr was instructed that, (d) although we wanted to avoid provoking Soviet irritation which would be of no help to the Poles, we thought it desirable for him to approach the Soviet Government again if they had not begun to send supplies to Warsaw. Mr. Eden had already telegraphed to Sir A. (e) Clark Kerr that in our opinion the question of Soviet help to Warsaw would have a decisive influence on Polish opinion with regard to future relations with Russia.

The chances of a favourable Soviet response did not seem very great. All the Moscow newspapers on August 13 had published articles putting the responsibility for the Warsaw rising on the Polish Government in London, and blaming them because they had not co-ordinated the rising with the Soviet Command. Meanwhile, in answer to the Polish appeal to President Roosevelt, the United States Government on August 14 instructed Mr. Harriman to ask that American aircraft should be allowed to use Soviet landing fields

(continued)

losses. The Chiefs of Staff agreed with this view. It was decided, however, to allow a Polish flight stationed at Brindisi to undertake the operation. Between August 4 and August 17 over 100 sorties were made by British, Polish and S.A.A.F. aircraft with the loss of 22 machines. At this time Air Marshal Slessor again protested that the losses were too great; the flights were then continued mainly by Polish volunteer crews on a reduced scale, in the hope that a smaller force would have better chances of getting through. The American strategic air force in Italy could not reach Warsaw. Owing to very heavy losses and a change-over in aircraft only a small number of British night bombers with the necessary capacity and range were available in Italy. We were diverting some of these from their operations in support of our landings in the south of France, but it was impossible for us to maintain the rate of supply to Warsaw.

¹ The Prime Minister told Stalin on August 12 of a message from the Poles in Warsaw describing their desperate situation and the lack of any outside support. He asked whether Stalin could not send further help, 'as the distance from Italy is so very great'. (f)

(a) C10714/61/55. (b) Chain 42 (Churchill Papers/352; C 10715/61/55). (c) Chain 34 (Churchill Papers/352; C10963/61/55). (d) C10783/61/55. (e) C10484/8/55. (f) T1609/4 (Churchill Papers/352).

in order to run a 'shuttle service' over Warsaw from Great Britain.¹

Mr. Harriman wrote a letter in this sense to M. Molotov. A reply (a) was given to this letter by M. Vyshinsky on August 15 that the Soviet Government could not allow these facilities and that the outbreak in Warsaw was merely the 'work of adventurers'.

(b) In view of M. Vyshinsky's statement, Sir A. Clark Kerr and Mr. Harriman asked at once for an interview with M. Molotov. M. Molotov was not in Moscow, so the Ambassadors saw M. Vyshinsky. They told him that in their opinion the Russians were making a grave mistake and should reconsider their decision. It was possible that the Polish rebellion had been premature, but the Poles were fighting Germans and deserved the fullest support. If it became known that the Soviet Government had refused to co-operate in the American attempt, at considerable risk, to help the Poles, there would be hostile criticism, and colour would be given to the false story that the Soviet Army were holding back from Warsaw for reasons of policy.

M. Vyshinsky said that the Soviet authorities had made attempts at co-operation, but that the rebellion had been wrong in conception and execution. He had good grounds for describing it as the work of adventurers. The Soviet Government regarded the war as a serious thing, and to play at a revolt and to drag three Allies into an adventure was not serious. The Soviet Government could therefore have no hand in it. As for criticism of the Red Army, even now the army and the Soviet Government was being slandered, but he was indifferent to such attacks.

The two Ambassadors continued to press their case, but M. Vyshinsky would not change his view, or even explain why Stalin should have told M. Mikolajczyk that he would send help to the Poles while he—M. Vyshinsky—now talked of an 'adventure'.

(c) On August 16 Sir A. Clark Kerr was instructed that his action was approved and that, in view of the issues at stake, which went far beyond the immediate fate of the population of Warsaw, he should make every effort to see Stalin, or, if this were impossible, M. Molotov, in order to bring home to them our deep anxiety about the serious effect of their present attitude not only on Polish-Soviet but on Anglo-Soviet relations. Hitherto the Soviet authorities had been condemning the inactivity of the Polish Underground movement; public opinion in Great Britain and other countries would consider that the constant exhortations by the Soviet press and wireless to the

¹ The United States Air Force had obtained (after much delay) in February 1944 the consent of the Soviet Government to the use of bases in Soviet territory for shuttle flights in the bombing of Germany. After further delay, these American bases had been established in the Ukraine. The Royal Air Force had no such arrangement with the Russians, and no ground organisation behind the Soviet front.

(a) C10731/61/55. (b) C10730/61/55. (c) C10730/61/55.

Poles to rise and attack Germans imposed a strong moral obligation on the Soviet Government to help the Poles now fighting in Warsaw.

Our own policy had always been that the more powerful among the United Nations should help all those who were fighting the Germans. We were doing our best to bring assistance to the Poles at relatively heavy cost and in spite of geographical and other difficulties. The absence of Soviet assistance would certainly be misinterpreted. In any case there seemed to be no justification for the refusal of the facilities required by our American Allies to make their contribution to the relief of Warsaw. Furthermore it was clear that M. Mikolajczyk had come back from Moscow determined to base his future policy on faith in Soviet good intentions. His main argument in persuading his colleagues to accept the Soviet demands was Stalin's undertaking to send help to Warsaw. If the present Soviet attitude were maintained, M. Mikolajczyk's personal position would be fatally harmed, and there would be little chance of a Polish-Soviet settlement. The effect upon Anglo-Soviet relations would be equally damaging. Sir A. Clark Kerr was instructed to try to get Mr. Harriman to support his representations, but not on this account to delay them.

Sir A. Clark Kerr reported on August 17 that he and Mr. Harri- (a)
man were asking urgently for an interview with Stalin, but that on the previous night M. Vyshinsky had read to Mr. Harriman a statement—in order to avoid misunderstanding—that the Soviet Government could not object to English or American aircraft dropping arms in the region of Warsaw; this was an American and British affair. They decidedly objected to such aircraft, after dropping arms, landing on Soviet territory since the Soviet Government did not wish to associate themselves either directly or indirectly with the adventure in Warsaw. Later Sir A. Clark Kerr telegraphed that (b)
in answer to a letter which he had sent to M. Molotov on receiving his instructions from the Foreign Office, M. Molotov had replied in the exact words of M. Vyshinsky's statement to Mr. Harriman.

Sir A. Clark Kerr and Mr. Harriman had a long meeting with (c)
M. Molotov later in the evening of August 17. They repeated their representations in favour of helping the Poles in their desperate fight against the Germans, and once again pointed out the serious effect upon British and American opinion of the Soviet refusal even to allow United States aircraft to use Soviet airfields. M. Molotov was unmoved. He returned more than once to the argument that the rising in Warsaw was the work of 'bankrupt Polish adventurers' and that the Polish press and wireless in London were using it as an opportunity for slandering the Soviet Government. In face of (d)
M. Molotov's stubbornness the Ambassadors could do no more than

(a) C10822/61/55. (b) C10838/61/55. (c) C10909/61/55. (d) C10908/61/55.

secure an admission from him that Soviet policy towards the rising had changed since Stalin's conversation of August 9 with M. Mikolajczyk. M. Molotov maintained that this change of policy had occurred after the Soviet Government had discovered the real nature of the Warsaw adventure.

- On August 17 the Prime Minister received a message (dated (a) August 16) from Stalin that, after his conversation with M. Mikolajczyk, he had given orders that the Red Army should drop arms 'intensively' in the Warsaw sector. A parachutist liaison officer was also dropped, who, according to the report of the Soviet Command, was killed before reaching his objective.¹ After further information, however, Stalin was convinced that the Warsaw action was a reckless and terrible adventure which was costing the population large sacrifices. This would not have been the case if the Soviet Command had been informed before the operation began and if the Poles had maintained contact with it. In these circumstances the Soviet Command had come to the conclusion that it must dissociate itself from the 'Warsaw adventure', since it could not take either direct or indirect responsibility for it.
- (b) Mr. Eden sent for the Soviet Ambassador in the afternoon of August 18 to tell him of our grave concern over Stalin's message and the Soviet refusal to allow the use of a Soviet aerodrome for American aircraft to supply Warsaw. Mr. Eden repeated the arguments already put forward in discussions with the Russians; M. Gusev replied with the Russian attempts to depreciate the military importance of the rising in Moscow and to disclaim Soviet responsibility.
- (c) Two days later, in response to another appeal from M. Mikolajczyk, the Prime Minister and President Roosevelt (at the former's suggestion) sent a joint message to Stalin urging him either to drop supplies in Warsaw or to help Allied aircraft to do so. They told Stalin that he and they should do their utmost to save as many as possible of the Polish patriots fighting in Warsaw, and that the time element was now of extreme importance.
- (d) Mr. Eden saw M. Mikolajczyk, M. Romer and Count Raczynski again on August 21 to discuss the question of assistance to Warsaw. M. Mikolajczyk said that all assistance appeared to have ceased. If help could be sent on the scale promised by the Americans, the Polish forces might hold out for another week or even longer. M. Mikolajczyk had been asked by some of his colleagues to resign, but was delaying a decision until he had seen Mr. Eden. He had

¹ See above, p. 206, note 2.

(a) T1629/4 (Churchill Papers/352; C11228/1077/55). (b) C10926/61/55. (c) T1635/4, Churchill to Roosevelt No. 760 (Churchill Papers/352; C11510/1077/55); T1640/4, Roosevelt to Churchill No. 601 (Churchill Papers/352; C11259/1077/55); T1643/4 (Churchill Papers/352; C11259/1077/55). (d) C11096/61/55.

received no answer to a telegram sent to Stalin four days ago through M. Lebedev. Meanwhile the Soviet Air Force had been dropping leaflets on Warsaw saying that the city would soon be relieved and that the leaders of the rising would be arrested and punished.

M. Mikolajczyk had told M. Molotov on August 2 about the rising, but he (Molotov) had then made no criticism of the decision. Stalin's change of mind could not be due to a belief that the Polish forces in Warsaw were the instruments of General Sosnkowski and not of M. Mikolajczyk. He had explained the whole situation to Stalin, and Stalin had clearly understood it. Moreover mass arrests of the Underground Army and civil administration were now going on all over Poland.¹

Mr. Eden asked what more he could do. He said that he would raise the matter at the War Cabinet in an hour's time, and would enquire whether it would be possible to reinforce from the Polish Air Force in England the Polish squadrons at Bari. He also suggested that the whole question of air assistance might be discussed on the following day between M. Mikolajczyk and any other Polish representatives and the Secretary of State for Air and the Chief of the Air Staff. He would be present at the meeting. M. Mikolajczyk welcomed this proposal.

Count Raczynski raised again the question of a British declaration on the question of belligerent rights for the Polish insurgents. He said that the Germans were quoting the words of the Tass agency in justification of their declared intention to treat the insurgents as *francs-tireurs*.

Mr. Eden told the War Cabinet on August 21 of the Polish request (a) for a British declaration. The War Cabinet agreed that he should draft a statement for consideration. Before the terms of the declaration were decided an answer was received from Stalin to the joint (b) appeal from the Prime Minister and the President. This answer, which was sent from Moscow on August 22, merely repeated in stronger terms the charge that the Warsaw rising was the work of a 'group of criminals' who aimed at seizing power, and had exploited the good faith of the people of Warsaw. From a military point of view the rising was hindering the Soviet Army, since it was increasingly drawing the German attention to Warsaw.² The Soviet

¹ According to General Bor-Komorowski (*op. cit.*, 294), an Order of the Day of the 16th Soviet Infantry Regiment on August 24 laid down that the infiltration of Polish Home Army units towards Warsaw was to be stopped by strict control of roads and traffic. Arms being smuggled into Warsaw were to be confiscated, and drivers arrested. All arms dumps and equipment or food stores intended for Warsaw were to be seized, and Polish Home Army units, if still existing, were to be disarmed and directed to military centres.

² The weakness of this argument is obvious since, if the Germans were bringing more troops to the Warsaw area, the Polish rebels were attacking and containing them, and therefore deserved support.

(a) WM(44)109. (b) T1662/4, Clasp 185 (Churchill Papers/352; C11351/1077/55.)

army was doing its utmost to free Warsaw, and its efforts were the best and most effective assistance which could be given to those Poles who were anti-Nazi.

- The Prime Minister considered it desirable to reply to this further refusal to help the Poles. The Poles in Warsaw sent another desperate
- (a) appeal on August 24. The President thought that nothing could be done unless the Russians allowed Allied aeroplanes to land and take off from Soviet aerodromes. The Prime Minister, however, tele-
 - (b) graphed on this day to Mr. Eden suggesting another joint Anglo-American message proposing to Stalin that American aircraft might land on Soviet territory without enquiry from the Russians as to what they had done on the way. The Soviet Government would thus avoid any association with the Warsaw rising. We did not ourselves try to form an opinion about the leaders who began an insurrection which was certainly called for repeatedly by Moscow radio. Our sympathies were, however, with the 'almost unarmed people' (here the Prime Minister was using Stalin's own words) whose special faith had led them to attack German guns, tanks and aircraft. We therefore proposed, unless Stalin directly forbade us, to send the planes. The Prime Minister thought that if Stalin made no reply we should in fact send the planes, since it was inconceivable that he
 - (c) would maltreat or detain them. Mr. Eden entirely agreed with the Prime Minister's proposal. He had already suggested to Mr. Winant that American aeroplanes should 'gate-crash' on Russian airfields. The Chief of Staff also agreed with the suggestion.
 - (d) Mr. Eden therefore transmitted the Prime Minister's message at once to President Roosevelt. The President replied on August 26
 - (e) that, in view of Stalin's refusal to permit the use of Russian bases, and of current American conversations in regard to the subsequent American use of other Soviet bases, he did not think it advantageous to the long-range prospects of the war for him to join in the Prime Minister's proposed message, though he did not object to the despatch of such a message by the Prime Minister alone.
 - (f) The War Cabinet considered on August 24 the terms of a draft declaration recognising the Polish Underground Army as a belligerent force. It was suggested during the discussion that there might be some danger of a counter-declaration by the Russians, and that we ought therefore to try to get the agreement of the Soviet Government. On the other hand the Russians had already refused to associate

(a) T1665/4, No. 605, Clasp 201, Churchill Papers/352. (b) Chain 209 (Churchill Papers/352; C11367/1077/55). (c) Clasp 214 (Churchill Papers/352; C11827/1077/55). (d) T1688.4, No. 769 (Churchill Papers/352; C11367/1077/55). (e) T1681/4, No. 606 (Churchill Papers/352; C11362/1077/55). (f) WM(44)110, C.A.; WP(44)462; C11339/1077/55.

themselves with a declaration. We had definite obligations to the Poles, and to the Polish Government in London. Moreover, if owing to Russian opposition we withheld the declaration, M. Mikolajczyk might resign, and his administration be succeeded by a new Government even less likely to secure a Soviet-Polish understanding. The War Cabinet therefore agreed to make the declaration after trying first to get American participation in it. They also decided to consider a further approach to the Soviet Government.

On August 28 Mr. Eden saw the Polish Ministers again. M. (a) Mikolajczyk showed him messages from the Polish Commander-in-Chief and a British officer with the insurgents. These messages made it clear that the position in Warsaw was now almost hopeless. In answer to a question Mr. Eden told M. Mikolajczyk in confidence that President Roosevelt considered it useless to press the Soviet authorities further to provide facilities for the landing of American aircraft on Soviet aerodromes. Mr. Eden explained that it was operationally impossible to send a big expedition from this country to drop supplies on Warsaw, but he promised to arrange a meeting between the British and Polish Chiefs of the Air Staff to discuss the question. He also said that he intended to speak to M. Gusev about the arrests of officers of the Underground Movement and civil administration throughout Poland.¹ He suggested that the Polish Ambassador in Washington should ask the State Department to raise the matter with the Soviet Ambassador. Mr. Eden said that the United States Government had not yet answered our proposal for a joint declaration about belligerent rights, but that in any case we should publish our own declaration on August 29.

Mr. Eden reported this discussion to the War Cabinet in the late (b) afternoon of August 28. He said that the Poles could not understand why we could make a heavy attack on Königsberg and yet were unable to send supplies to Warsaw. The Chief of Air Staff explained that the two operations were not comparable. Königsberg was bombed from about 18,000 feet, and the flight to it was mainly over the sea. The Warsaw operation would have to be carried out at 1,000 feet, and at a very low speed, over a city strongly defended by anti-aircraft guns. Hitherto the flights made from Italy to Warsaw had been carried out by Polish volunteers. The Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief in the Mediterranean had come to the conclusion that the risks were so great that the attempt could hardly be regarded as an operation of war.²

¹ Mr. Eden carried out this promise on August 31. No reply was received from the Soviet Government until September 20, when M. Gusev said that the Polish charges were untrue. (c)

² See above, p. 206, note 4.

(a) C11434/1077/55. (b) WM(44)111. 7, C.A. (c) C11540/1077/55; C12550/61/55.

The War Cabinet decided that the question of further flights from Italy should be referred to the Prime Minister on his return, and that, subject to the Prime Minister's approval, we should publish our declaration about belligerency without consulting the Russians.

- (a) The United States Government agreed on the issue of simultaneous parallel declarations, and the British declaration was published on the night of August 29–30.
- (b) Meanwhile M. Mikolajczyk had shown to the Foreign Office a programme which he had drawn up to satisfy the conditions required by Stalin for the establishment of a reconstituted Polish Government in Warsaw. M. Mikolajczyk proposed to set up in Warsaw a Government in which each of the four parties in the existing Government and the Communists would be equally represented. The reconstituted Polish Government would then summon a Constituent Assembly, in accordance with the Polish Constitution of 1935, to pass a new democratic Constitution and elect a new President. The general direction of the armed forces would pass into the hands of a War Cabinet, and the office of Commander-in-Chief would be abolished. The programme implicitly reasserted the Polish claims to Lwow and Vilna.

- Sir O. O'Malley said that these proposals would not satisfy Stalin.¹ M. Romer explained that M. Mikolajczyk knew that he would have to make more concessions, but he could carry Polish opinion with him only by taking one step at a time. On August 30 M. Romer produced a revised programme; he explained once again
- (c) that this programme did not represent M. Mikolajczyk's final terms, and that it should be regarded only as a basis for discussion. He hoped to reach a compromise; owing to the Warsaw situation he could not persuade his colleagues at present to go beyond the revised terms.

M. Grabski, on behalf of the Polish Ministers, gave this revised programme to M. Lebedev on August 30 with a request that he would telegraph it to Moscow. M. Grabski added a number of verbal explanations. The most important of these glosses was that M. Mikolajczyk would in fact allow the representatives of the National Committee a larger proportion than one-fifth of the seats in the new Government, and that he would do so by including supporters of the Committee in the 'quotas' of the Peasant and Socialist parties. M. Grabski also said that the formula about frontiers had been accepted by Stalin during the talks at Moscow. Sir O. O'Malley

¹ Sir O. O'Malley pointed out, in discussing the programme with M. Romer on August 25, that the plan would put in a permanent minority representatives of the National Committee of Liberation, or any other party taking its orders from the Soviet Government.

(a) C11434, 11368/1077/55. (b) C11344/140/55. (c) C11596/8/55.

now thought that, although the programme might not satisfy the Russians to the extent of securing an invitation to M. Mikolajczyk to go to Warsaw, Stalin—if he were at all sincere in his assurances about an independent Poland—must at least continue the discussions.

On September 1 the Prime Minister told M. Mikolajczyk that we (a) had done everything in our power to bring help to Warsaw, but that the losses had been more than 30 per cent.¹ We had achieved little enough, but it was all we could do. The Prime Minister had urged President Roosevelt to take action and had suggested 'gate-crashing'; the President felt that he could not allow this, and we had no suitable aircraft. Stalin's refusal of facilities to American planes was 'pure folly, which would strike a chill on all those who hoped for future co-operation with Russia'. M. Mikolajczyk mentioned a new method of dropping supplies from a great height. The Prime Minister telephoned to the Vice-Chief of Air Staff and was told that this new plan was under urgent consideration. The Prime Minister then said that M. Mikolajczyk was right in continuing his efforts to get a solution of the Polish-Soviet problem, and that he must not resign. We should give no support to anyone who tried to replace him.²

The War Cabinet discussed the situation in Warsaw again on (b) September 4. They agreed that it was of the utmost importance to do everything possible to help the Poles but that the only effective step open to us was to ask President Roosevelt to reconsider the question of 'gate-crashing', if necessary, on Russian airfields. The War Cabinet also thought Stalin might not even yet realise the probable effect upon Anglo-Russian relations of the Russian refusal to allow the use of their airfields for aircraft carrying supplies to Warsaw.

Sir A. Clark Kerr was therefore instructed on September 4 to give (c) a message from the War Cabinet to M. Molotov to the effect that they had considered the latest reports of the fighting in Warsaw and wished the Soviet Government to know that public opinion in Great Britain was deeply moved by the terrible sufferings of the Poles. Whatever the rights and wrongs about the beginning of the rising, the people of Warsaw were not to blame. It was becoming known generally that material help could not be sent to Warsaw on account

¹ This figure does not appear to be accurate. See p. 217, note 1.

² The Prime Minister at this time had read the tragic appeal to the Pope from the women of Warsaw on August 22. He was considering whether he and the President might send a joint telegram to Stalin saying that, since Stalin had not helped Warsaw, they proposed to cut off the convoys to Russia. The Foreign Office thought that a threat of this kind would only be harmful to the Poles. The Prime Minister came to the same conclusion. (d)

(a) C11776/8/55. (b) WM(44)115-2, C.A. (c) C11842/1077/55. (d) C11829/1077/55.

of the Soviet refusal to allow American aircraft to land on aerodromes in Russian hands. If the Poles were now overwhelmed by the Germans, as we were told they must be within two or three days, the shock to British public opinion would be incalculable. The War Cabinet found it hard to understand the refusal of the Soviet Government to take account of the obligations of the British and American Governments to help the Poles in Warsaw. The refusal of the Soviet Government to allow us to provide assistance seemed to us at variance with the spirit of Allied co-operation. The War Cabinet therefore made a further appeal to the Soviet Government to give whatever help might be in their power, and above all to consent to the landing of American aircraft for this purpose on Soviet aerodromes.

- (a) The Prime Minister sent a copy of this appeal to President Roosevelt suggesting that the President might authorise the United States Air Force to drop supplies on Warsaw and to land, if necessary, on Russian airfields without the formal consent of the Russian authorities. The Prime Minister did not think that the Russians could reject a *fait accompli* of this kind; they might even welcome it as a means of getting out of an awkward situation.¹
- (b) On the following day Mr. Eden told M. Mikolajczyk and M. Romer of these messages. M. Mikolajczyk said that Warsaw could not hold out for more than two or three days, and that the Russians were deporting masses of Poles from east of the Curzon line and arresting many others west of the line. Mr. Eden suggested that, in order to prevent a massacre by the Germans when the fighting ceased in Warsaw, we might issue another warning to the Germans against committing atrocities upon the Polish population. Meanwhile we would continue in our broadcasts to give prominence to the Anglo-American declaration about belligerent status.

M. Mikolajczyk then went on to speak about the situation in the Polish Cabinet. He said that he would be forced to resign later in the day. Mr. Eden repeated with all possible force the Prime Minister's statement of confidence in M. Mikolajczyk. No good would come to Poland if he were replaced by others who would be anti-Russian and associated with General Sosnkowski's point of view. Mr. Eden asked if it would be useful for him to see the President of the Republic.

M. Mikolajczyk did not think that this proposal would be useful. He said that there was a certain amount of truth in General Sosnkowski's assertions that Poland had received no help from Russia

¹ The Prime Minister also telegraphed to the President a copy of the telegram sent by the women of Warsaw to the Pope.

(a) T1740/4, No. 779 (Churchill Papers/352; C11842/1077.55). (b) C11843/8/55).
 (c) T1742/4, No. 781 (Churchill Papers/352; C11842/1077.55).

and only inadequate help from us when we might have saved the situation by sending one large bomber expedition to Warsaw.

Mr. Eden said that an operation of this kind was impossible and arranged for a meeting later in the day at which the Assistant Chief of Air Staff would explain once again the technical difficulties.¹ M. Mikolajczyk said that General Sosnkowski and the leaders of the Polish army were threatening to resign; that the troops were feeling bitterly about the situation, and that there was a demand for his resignation on the ground that his conciliatory foreign policy had failed also to persuade the British and American Governments to give adequate help to Poland. In these circumstances he had decided to resign and to enlist as a private soldier. M. Romer said that he also was likely to resign. Mr. Eden once again spoke of the importance of M. Mikolajczyk remaining in office, and asked him to wait at least for forty-eight hours until we had received a reply to our latest communication to Moscow. As a result of these representations the Polish Government agreed for the time being to remain in office.

¹ The Vice-Chief of the Air Staff discussed the technical position with the War Cabinet on September 5. Out of 182 aircraft already sent from the Mediterranean bases to Warsaw, 35 had been lost, and 5 badly damaged. On September 10 the Vice-Chief of the Air Staff informed the War Cabinet that the Americans estimated that only about 10 per cent of the supplies dropped in a daylight operation, and a smaller percentage dropped at night would reach the Poles. Our own estimates ranged between 20 and 5 per cent, according to weather conditions. (a)

(a) WM(44)117. 1, C.A.; WP(44)513.

CHAPTER XL

Great Britain and Russo-Polish relations, September 1944–February 1945

(i)

Russian agreement to the British and American demands: the fall of Warsaw: Stalin's acceptance of the Prime Minister's proposal that the Polish Ministers should be invited to take part in the Moscow conversations (September 9–October 12, 1944).

- (a) **T**he Soviet Government did not reply to the message from the War Cabinet until the evening of September 9. The reply was in Sir A. Clark Kerr's words, a 'climb-down', though it was accompanied by a further denunciation of the 'Warsaw adventure' as undertaken without the knowledge of the Soviet command and in violation of their operational plans. The Soviet Government maintained that their troops alone were fighting for the liberation of Poland. They did not regard the dropping of supplies on Warsaw as an effective method of help but if the British Government were convinced of the value of this form of assistance, and insisted upon the Soviet Command organising such assistance jointly with the British and Americans, the Soviet Government would agree.
- (b) On September 10 M. Mikolajczyk again appealed to the Prime Minister and President Roosevelt for a large-scale operation which would combine the bombing of German concentrations with the
- (c) dropping of supplies. The War Cabinet, after hearing the views of the British Air Staff, regarded this proposal to mix bombing with the dropping of supplies as impracticable for British aircraft from Italy or Great Britain; they hoped, however, that General Eisenhower would be able to organise the 'shuttle service' now that Russian permission had been given for United States aircraft to use Russian airfields.

General Eisenhower gave instructions for arrangements to be discussed with the Russian authorities. A large American operation was immediately planned; the operation was delayed by bad weather, but took place on September 18. A considerable quantity of supplies was dropped; the Soviet air force undertook covering operations, and the American bombers went on to land on Soviet bases. The flights of British aircraft, manned by Polish volunteer crews, were

(a) C11965, 12010/1077/55. (b) C12192/1077/55. (c) WM(44)122.7, C.A.

also continued from Italy. Meanwhile on September 12 the Polish Government communicated to M. Lebedev for transmission to (a) Moscow a message addressed by General Bor-Komorowski to Marshal Rokossovsky asking for assistance and proposing co-ordination between the Soviet and Polish commands. On the following day a small consignment of supplies dropped by the Russians reached the Poles in Warsaw. The Russians had now resumed their attack against the Germans in the suburbs of Warsaw and Soviet aircraft were in action over Warsaw. From this time the Russians continued to drop supplies almost daily and to provide air support and anti-aircraft defence for the Polish army. Some of the troops of the so-called Kosciuszko Division (the Russian-recruited Polish force under General Berling) crossed the river, but had to withdraw as the riverside districts fell to the Germans.

The Foreign Office considered that Stalin's consent at last to (b) co-operate in sending help to Warsaw was a sign that we could get him to see reason if we had a good case and pressed it firmly. They also regarded Stalin's action as opening the way to a resumption of Russo-Polish conversations. Hence they thought it better not to answer the contentious points in M. Molotov's message of September 9 but to concentrate upon bringing together the London Poles and the Committee of National Liberation. The first step was to secure the dismissal of General Sosnkowski.

Mr. Eden therefore saw M. Mikolajczyk and M. Romer on (c) September 13 before he left for Quebec. He told the Polish Ministers that the Prime Minister had strongly expressed the view that General Sosnkowski must give up his command at once.¹ Mr. Eden had agreed with this view, and had instructed Sir O. O'Malley to make it known to the President of Poland. Nothing, however, had been done. We still felt that the Poles should act on their own initiative, but, if the President hesitated, we would ask him to dismiss the general. M. Mikolajczyk said that he had asked the President on September 9 to dismiss General Sosnkowski, and that the President had refused to do so. M. Mikolajczyk promised Mr. Eden that he would make another attempt; if he failed to convince the President and desired our intervention, we should ourselves ask for the general to be removed.

Mr. Eden said that, after General Sosnkowski had gone, the Polish Ministers ought to tell M. Lebedev that they wished to know whether the Soviet Government approved of the programme which had been

¹ In addition to the fact that General Sosnkowski was especially distrusted by the Soviet Government, and was taking a line of policy opposed to that of M. Mikolajczyk, the British Government objected to public statements by the General blaming the Allied Command for not giving more assistance to the insurgents in Warsaw.

(a) C12788/1077/55. (b) C12010/1077/55. (c) C12354/8/55.

submitted to them.¹ M. Mikolajczyk said that he had attempted on September 9 to get from M. Lebedev some idea of the Soviet views, but that M. Lebedev would not commit himself to any statement; meanwhile the Soviet Government were encouraging the National Committee to continue their plans for establishing their authority on a revolutionary basis in Poland. M. Mikolajczyk did not think that the Russians would allow him to return to Moscow or to go to Warsaw unless the British and American Governments showed that they were strongly supporting him.

- (a) During Mr. Eden's absence from London Sir O. O'Malley tried, without success, to persuade the President of Poland to dismiss
- (b) General Sosnkowski. Mr. Eden saw M. Mikolajczyk and M. Romer again on September 19. He said that while he was in Quebec the Prime Minister and President Roosevelt had been considering whether they would send a telegram to Stalin suggesting that he should invite M. Mikolajczyk to return to Moscow.² Mr. Eden thought it most important that negotiations should be resumed in Moscow since it was impracticable to conduct them satisfactorily through Russian representatives abroad; in any case the Russians suspected that in London the Poles were too much under the guidance of the British Government.

M. Mikolajczyk said that he did not regard it as possible for him to go back to Moscow until the Soviet Government had sent a reasoned answer to his proposals. He agreed that the dismissal of General Sosnkowski was essential if the negotiations were to be resumed. Mr. Eden said that he would now take the responsibility of telling the President of Poland that he must dismiss General Sosnkowski at once.³

- (c) On September 20, therefore, Mr. Eden told the President of Poland that the War Cabinet were much disturbed at the differences of policy between the Polish Government and General Sosnkowski, and at the fact that the President had refused to accept the demand of the Polish Government for the General's resignation. The President admitted that the situation was difficult, but said that he had to consider the effect on the Polish army of General Sosnkowski's dismissal. If, however, Mr. Eden were to state officially that we had no confidence in General Sosnkowski and demanded his replacement the matter would be very serious. He admitted that in any case the present position could not continue. He said that he would see

¹ See above, p. 214.

(d) ² This telegram was not sent.

(e) ³ Mr. Eden had told the War Cabinet on September 18 that he proposed to act in this sense.

(a) C12650/8/55. (b) C12658/8/55. (c) C12604/8/55. (d) C13001/61/55.
(e) WM(44)123.9, C.A.

M. Mikolajczyk again during the afternoon and try to come to a decision.

The President agreed on September 28 to relieve General (a) Sosnkowski of his post. The General's formal resignation took place on September 30. General Bor-Komorowski, the commander at Warsaw, was appointed to succeed him, with a statement that he would take up his duties when he could perform them in the place in which the President and Government of Poland had their seat. After General Bor-Komorowski had been made a prisoner of war by the Germans in Warsaw, the Polish Government decided to continue the interim arrangement about the duties of the Commander-in-Chief. Meanwhile the Minister of National Defence and the Chief of Staff would act for the Commander-in-Chief. General Bor-Komorowski's appointment was strongly attacked by the Russian-sponsored Polish Committee of National Liberation. The Committee stated that he was a 'criminal' who was worse hated than General Sosnkowski.¹

During this time the situation in Warsaw had again become graver. On September 28 General Bor-Komorowski sent word that he would have to surrender on October 1 owing to lack of food. The Polish Government appealed urgently for a second large-scale American operation to drop supplies to the insurgents and the United States Air Command promised to do so as soon as possible. M. Mikolajczyk also appealed on September 30—through the British Embassy—to Stalin for immediate operations to liberate the city. On October 2, however, the United States Ambassador heard that (b) the Russians had refused to agree to another American air operation. Mr. Winant thought that the President would be unwilling to approach Stalin again in the matter.

General Bor-Komorowski, however, had already been compelled to open negotiations with the Germans. At 5 a.m. on October 4 he sent a message from Warsaw to the Polish Government that he and his staff would surrender at midday.² So ended the rising which had lasted over sixty days against overwhelming German force.³

¹ General Bor-Komorowski, on hearing of his appointment, was unwilling to leave the men who had been fighting with him in Warsaw.

² The enforced surrender of General Bor-Komorowski to the Germans made it impossible for the Polish Committee of National Liberation to carry out their declared intention of bringing the General to trial for the 'crime' of starting the insurrection. The Foreign Office had instructed Sir A. Clark Kerr to make very strong representations to the Soviet Government if the Committee appeared likely to carry out their threat to General Bor-Komorowski. (c)

³ The Prime Minister spoke in the House of Commons on October 5 about the heroic action of the insurgents. He also sent a personal letter to M. Mikolajczyk expressing his deep sorrow at our inability to provide more effective assistance. A broadcast from Warsaw, heard in London before the inevitable surrender, spoke of the 'terrible injustice suffered by the Polish nation'. 'We were treated worse than Hitler's satellites.' (d) (e)

(a) C13311/8/55. (b) C13756/1077/55. (c) C13957/8/55; C12365, 12 354/55
(d) Churchill Papers/352. (e) C13757/1077/55.

- (a) Before the end of the Polish rising in Warsaw M. Mikolajczyk had again approached M. Lebedev. He said that he was still awaiting an answer to the proposals which he had sent to Moscow, and that he was ready to continue discussions either in London or by sending a mission to Moscow or to Warsaw after the liberation of the city. The Soviet Government did not reply to this approach.

The situation was now extremely grim both for the future of Poland and also for the future of the Anglo-Russian alliance. The Prime Minister had already decided that the only chance of saving Polish independence was for him and Mr. Eden to see Stalin in Moscow. There were indeed other compelling reasons for this visit;¹ the urgency of finding a solution to the Polish dispute required that the visit should be made at once. Hence the Prime Minister acted quickly. He made his proposal to Stalin on September 27, and, having done so, told the President of the plan.² Stalin sent a favourable answer on October 2. A week later the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden arrived in Moscow.

The Foreign Office were not hopeful of the results of these direct talks. They considered that we should support M. Mikolajczyk's proposals, but that there did not seem much likelihood of getting Soviet agreement to them. Our position was that in the interest of Allied unity, and of our own commitments to the Poles, we wanted an early settlement. The Russians, however, thought that their purposes were better served by delay. The Soviet Government had already committed us to support their territorial demands. Their next step would be to obtain control of any future Government of Poland. At present M. Mikolajczyk's administration and the Underground movement in Poland had far greater prestige and authority in Poland than the Russian-sponsored National Committee. On the other hand the longer time the Russians had to arrest the Underground leaders and dispose of their administration, while M. Mikolajczyk's Government remained in exile, the stronger the National Committee would become.

The Russians could easily get more delay without even discussing M. Mikolajczyk's programme. They merely had to bring forward their previous objections to the President of Poland, or to the 1935 Constitution, or they could quote the Polish refusal hitherto to accept publicly and unequivocally the Curzon line. Our only chance of success was to convince the Russians that the future of

¹ See above, Chapter XXXVIII, section (vi).

² Mr. Roosevelt's unwillingness to commit himself to controversial proposals immediately before the Presidential election was especially strong in relation to Poland, since any compromise solution likely to be accepted by the Russians would be severely criticised by Polish-American opinion.

(a) C14017/8/55.

Anglo-Soviet co-operation really depended upon a rapid and equitable solution of the Polish problem. Here also we were not in a very strong position because the Russians had seen that the British Government and British public opinion might become indignant for a time at the Russian treatment of the Poles, but that this indignation was always short-lived.

Since the first step to a Russo-Polish agreement was to get the Polish Ministers back to Moscow for discussions, Mr. Churchill and (a) Mr. Eden decided to ask Stalin at their first meeting on October 9 that M. Mikolajczyk, M. Romer and M. Grabski should be invited at once to take part in the conversations in Moscow about Poland. They obtained Stalin's agreement to this plan and telegraphed accordingly to London. Their message crossed a telegram to the (b) Prime Minister from M. Mikolajczyk to the effect that, if invited, he would be willing to come to Moscow for conversations with the Soviet Government on the basis of his proposals of August 29. It was also clear that these proposals were to be understood in the light of the verbal explanations added by M. Grabski. In view of the recent attacks on the Polish Government by the National Committee, M. Mikolajczyk was not willing to accept an invitation merely to hold discussions with this Committee.

Mr. Eden telegraphed on October 10 to the Foreign Office that (c) M. Mikolajczyk should understand that, if he refused the invitation, he would lose the last chance of a settlement. If he came he would have British support for his memorandum, but he could not state conditions in advance or refuse to meet the National Committee after the ground had been prepared by the Russians and ourselves. Mr. Eden said that the atmosphere was most friendly and that it would be unpardonable not to take the opportunity now provided. The Prime Minister sent a message to M. Mikolajczyk that he was (d) expecting him in Moscow. Mr. Churchill also telegraphed to the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. Attlee) that the Poles should be told that a refusal to accept the invitation would be a definite rejection (e) of our advice and would relieve us of further responsibility as far as concerned the present Polish Government.¹

The Polish Ministers had in fact decided upon acceptance before (f) these messages arrived. They left London on the night of October 10-11. Meanwhile the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden had already (g) taken the opportunity, at a dinner in the British Embassy, to impress

¹ In a telegram of October 12 to Mr. Harry Hopkins the Prime Minister used the words: 'Under dire threats from us we persuaded Mikolajczyk and the Poles to accept the invitation we had extracted from the Russians.' (h)

(a) C13868/8/55. (b) Tel. Drastic 16 (Churchill Papers/355; C13870/8/55). (c) Tel. Hearty 15, C13869/8/55. (d) Hearty 16 (Churchill Papers/355, C13869/8/55). (e) Hearty 17 (Churchill Papers/355, C13869/8/55). (f) C13872/8/55. (g) C14115/8/55. (h) T1920/4, Churchill Papers/434.

on Stalin how essential it was in the interest of Anglo-Soviet relations that the Polish question should now be settled on a basis which would seem reasonable to the British people. The Prime Minister said to Stalin that we had entered the war for the sake of Poland and that the British people would not understand it if we now 'let down' the Poles. The London Poles and the Lublin Poles¹ must be told to make an agreement. If they refused or were unable to do so, the British and Soviet Governments must impose a reasonable settlement. During the conversation Stalin took great pains to assure the Prime Minister that the failure to relieve Warsaw had not been due to any lack of effort by the Soviet army. The failure was due entirely to the strength of the enemy and to difficulties of terrain. Stalin could not make a public admission of this failure, but the same situation had arisen at Kiev where the city was finally liberated by an outflanking movement. The Prime Minister said that he accepted Stalin's explanation 'absolutely', and that no serious persons in Great Britain had believed the reports of a deliberate refusal to relieve Warsaw. Criticism had referred only to the apparent unwillingness of the Russians to send aeroplanes. Mr. Harriman, who was present at the dinner, spoke in similar terms of the view taken in the United States.

(ii)

Attempts by the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden to secure a Russo-Polish settlement during the Moscow conversations: refusal of the Polish Government to endorse M. Mikolajczyk's agreement to the proposed settlement: resignation of M. Mikolajczyk (October 13–November 24, 1944).

- (a) On October 13 the British Ministers, Stalin, and M. Molotov held a meeting with the Polish representatives from London. Sir A. Clark Kerr and Mr. Harriman were also present. At M. Molotov's invitation M. Mikolajczyk went through his memorandum of proposals point by point, and M. Grabski gave an account of his conversation with M. Lebedev. Mr. Churchill emphasised that M. Mikolajczyk's memorandum was intended as a basis for compromise and discussion. Stalin said that, while the memorandum provided a useful plan for future Polish-Soviet relations, it ignored the existence of the Committee of National Liberation, which was already doing useful work, and did not offer a solution of the eastern frontier question. If the Polish Ministers wished to reach agreement with the Soviet Government, they must first accept the Curzon line as final.

¹ This term was used generally to designate the Committee of National Liberation now established in Lublin. The Committee remained at Lublin until the Russians entered Warsaw in mid-January 1945.

(a) C14300/8/55. (b) C14345/8/55.

Stalin thus withdrew the concession which he had made to M. Mikolajczyk in August that he did not require an immediate settlement of the frontier question.¹

M. Mikolajczyk replied that the Polish Government had also made a contribution to the Allied effort throughout the war, and that he had not expected to be asked to agree to a division of Polish territory. He then repeated the Polish arguments against the immediate acceptance of the Curzon line. Mr. Churchill appealed to him to recognise the fact that the British Government fully supported the Soviet claims on the frontier question, and that they did so not because Soviet Russia was strong, but because she was right, and because a solution on the basis of the Curzon line would give Poland the best guarantee for the future. He urged M. Mikolajczyk to get into friendly contact with the Polish Committee, and to accept the Curzon line as a *de facto* boundary line with the right to discuss subsequent adjustments at the Peace Conference. Stalin said that in any case the Curzon line must be the basis of the final frontier settlement.²

Later in the day the British Ministers, Stalin, and the two Ambassadors met the leaders of the Polish National Committee. Mr. Churchill explained that the British Government wanted the unity of all Poles and was distressed at the divisions which had developed among them. Owing to our consistent support of the Poles and the Polish Government since 1939, we were entitled to call upon all Poles to play their part in reaching a friendly settlement.

M. Bierut, with the support of the President of the Committee, M. Morawski, then stated a long list of grievances against M. Mikolajczyk and his Government. He said that the National Committee were still ready to make an agreement on condition that M. Mikolajczyk (i) accepted the 1921 constitution; (ii) endorsed the principles of the Committee's manifesto to the Polish people, and, in particular, accepted the necessity for land reform; (iii) took steps to prevent his followers from stirring up civil disturbances in Poland.

M. Bierut and M. Morawski did not make a good impression on the British Ministers.³ The Prime Minister objected to their attitude, and appealed to them repeatedly to be more constructive and less cantankerous. Stalin supported the Prime Minister's appeal for unity, and agreed that the constitutional issue should not be an obstacle to a settlement. He said, however, that immediate land reform was necessary, and to some extent upheld M. Morawski's charges that the agents of the Polish Government were causing

¹ See above, p. 199.

² M. Molotov told M. Mikolajczyk that President Roosevelt had agreed to the Curzon line but did not wish for the time to make public his assent.

³ The Prime Minister described them as 'inverted Quislings' who wanted to rule Poland. He told Stalin that he regarded them as 'only an expression of Soviet will'.

trouble in Poland. In general Stalin appeared to be concerned mainly to secure acceptance of the Curzon line (which the Committee's representatives readily conceded) and not to care much about the domestic ambitions of the Committee.

- (a) On the morning of October 14 the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden gave the Polish Ministers an account of their meeting with the Soviet representatives and the leaders of the National Committee. The Prime Minister said that the Polish Government would never again have such an opportunity of placing their relations with the Soviet Government on a firm basis. If matters went wrong now through the fault of the Polish Government the Prime Minister would have to make a statement in Parliament indicating a great change in our attitude towards them.

Mr. Churchill said that the frontier question was the main issue. If this issue were settled, the other problems would disappear since the Russians would be able to make their Polish puppets 'toe the line'. M. Mikolajczyk had lost a great chance earlier in the year when he had refused Mr. Churchill's proposal that he should accept the Curzon line. If he had then accepted it, the present problems would not have arisen; the National Committee would probably not have come into existence, and would certainly not have grown in influence as it was now doing, and must continue to do in default of any other governing authority in Poland. Mr. Churchill considered that M. Mikolajczyk could retrieve the situation only if he went to Poland at once. He should act on his own responsibility; it was useless for him to say that he had no authority to take a decision in the matter. If he set up a new Government in Poland, a British Ambassador and probably an American Ambassador would be able to give him their support.

M. Mikolajczyk said that in his view the three Powers had settled the frontier question at Teheran and the Poles were merely being told to accept their decision. He could not accept it alone since he had to consider the views of his colleagues and of his supporters in Poland. Moreover other issues were of importance, e.g. the question of the 1935 constitution, from which the Polish Government drew its legal authority, and the problem of fusion with the National Committee. It would not be safe for him to agree to merge his Government with the Committee under Soviet control; a settlement on these lines would not provide a guarantee that the independence of Poland west of the Curzon line could be maintained.

The Prime Minister then stated with the utmost force and energy that the Great Powers had now spent blood and treasure for a second time in a generation in order to liberate Poland; they could

(a) C14874/8/55.

not allow themselves to be drawn into a dispute for the sake of a Polish domestic quarrel. The world was growing tired of Polish quarrels, and the Poles must realise that far greater issues were at stake even than the fate of the eastern provinces of Poland.

M. Mikolajczyk replied that he knew that the fate of Poland had been settled at Teheran but that he was not without patriotic feeling. The matter was not solely a domestic quarrel between Poles. It was a quarrel between Poland and the Soviet Union. The Prime Minister's proposals would settle nothing. M. Mikolajczyk could not deal with agents of the Soviet Union since he would have no security for the future.

The Prime Minister said that the time was past when the Poles could afford the luxury of indulging their patriotic feeling. He warned M. Mikolajczyk again that if he did not accept the Curzon line as the basis of a frontier settlement, we should have nothing more to do with him. Poland was losing no territory which she had not in effect lost already; she would also receive new territory at German expense in the west. What mattered now was that M. Mikolajczyk and his friends should get a chance of helping to administer Poland instead of being swept aside and even liquidated as the Soviet armies advanced.

Mr. Eden emphasised that, if M. Mikolajczyk agreed to a formula accepting the Curzon line, he could count upon the support of the Prime Minister and himself to obtain satisfaction for him from Stalin on the other questions at issue. Any arrangement reached would be guaranteed by the British Government. Mr. Eden asked whether it would help the Polish Government if the formula about the Curzon line were to state that 'in view of the declared attitude of the British and Soviet Governments on the eastern frontier of Poland, the Polish Government accept. . . .' etc. A statement on these lines would be operative only as part of a general settlement covering the other questions.

M. Mikolajczyk said that the Polish Government would not have sufficient authority to persuade the Polish people to accept the cession of Polish territory during the war unless it could be shown clearly that they were doing so under the compulsion of the Great Powers. He thought that the Great Powers would have to state their views on the frontiers of Poland in the west as well as in the east, and that the Polish Government would have to acquiesce in the eastern frontier under protest and reservation of all their rights.

M. Romer asked why we were supporting the Soviet claim to the Curzon line when we did not require any cession of territory by France or Belgium as a reward for their liberation. Once the Polish Government had agreed to the Curzon line and to collaborate with the Poles who had helped the Soviet Government to acquire this

territory, there could be no guarantee of the independence of the rest of Poland. Even a British and an American Ambassador would be unable to give any help. M. Mikolajczyk added that the Communists needed only to secure the Polish Ministry of the Interior in order to get their way in Poland.

At this point the Prime Minister, who had left the meeting for a short time, came back with a formula dealing with the two matters which the Polish Ministers regarded as crucial, i.e. a statement about the Polish western frontier and an assurance of the independent sovereign authority of the new Government to be set up in Poland. The Prime Minister said that the British military command might not like the first statement since it might stiffen German resistance and cost more British lives. The Prime Minister would therefore have to consult his colleagues in London. He was not asking the Poles to accept his draft at once, but he was ready to see Stalin alone and to ask him whether, if the Polish Government agreed to his draft, or something like it, the Soviet Government would support it in the letter and in the spirit. He would ask what more Stalin wanted once the frontier question had been settled. He felt that Stalin would probably require nothing more than a Government in Poland upon whose friendship he could rely.

- (a) The Polish Ministers agreed to this proposal. The Prime Minister therefore had a private meeting in the afternoon of October 14 with Stalin. Stalin agreed in principle to a solution on the lines suggested in the Prime Minister's formula. Mr. Eden discussed the draft declaration with the Polish Ministers during the evening of October 14. He accepted some amendments put forward by the Poles mainly in order to make it clear that the British Government took full responsibility for the settlement, and that the Polish Government accepted it only in response to strong British pressure.

The Prime Minister and Mr. Eden met the Polish Ministers again on the morning of October 15. The Poles suggested other amendments, and, in particular, wished the Curzon line to be defined in the declaration as continuing through Eastern Galicia along the so-called Line B, which left Lwow to Poland.¹ The Prime Minister and Mr. Eden said that the Soviet Government would certainly not accept this definition. The Prime Minister was unwilling to submit it to Stalin, but would appeal to him in the interests of Anglo-Soviet relations and from the point of view of the attitude of world opinion towards the U.S.S.R. to agree to the retention of Lwow by the Poles. The Prime Minister, however, could make this appeal only if he were authorised—in the event of the failure of the appeal—to give

¹ See Volume II, Note to Chapter XXXV.

(a) C14222/8/55.

Stalin the draft declaration without reference to Lwow. M. Mikolajczyk declined this proposal.

Mr. Eden discussed the question again with the Polish Ministers during the afternoon of October 15. They insisted that Lwow must be covered in the declaration. Mr. Eden warned them again that their insistence would mean a breakdown for which they would bear the responsibility. The Polish Ministers repeated that they would be repudiated by their followers if they surrendered Lwow.¹

Mr. Eden told Stalin and M. Molotov, at the close of a discussion (a) on military matters on the evening of October 15, that the Poles had been persuaded, with much difficulty, to agree to the draft declaration, and that they would now accept it, with one reservation. This reservation could be expressed in a single word which Stalin would guess. Stalin smiled, but made no comment. Mr. Eden said that the word was 'Lwow'; he asked most earnestly whether Stalin could help in the matter.

Stalin replied at once that he understood and sympathised with our difficulties but that he could not give up Lwow. He was an old man, and could not be expected to go to his grave under the stigma of having betrayed the Ukrainians. M. Molotov said that during the afternoon M. Grabski had been to see him on the subject, and that he had said that it was impossible for the Soviet Government to leave Lwow to the Poles. M. Molotov said to Mr. Eden that they would need patience. The future would convince M. Mikolajczyk that he was wrong. In reporting the conversation to the Foreign Office Mr. (b) Eden stated that the Russian attitude was most friendly but that they clearly would not change their intention of making the Ukraine as a whole into a separate Soviet Republic.

On the morning of October 16 Mr. Eden told the Polish Ministers (c) that Stalin seemed genuinely to want a settlement but that he would not yield on Lwow. Mr. Eden hoped that the Poles would nevertheless be willing to resume discussions; he said that he was ready to stay in Moscow as long as might be necessary in order to help them. M. Mikolajczyk now appeared to have accepted the loss of Lwow as inevitable, but he said that he must not promise something which he could not fulfil, i.e. he could not now agree publicly to the Curzon line. He suggested a return to his earlier proposal for a demarcation line, with the difference that the line would follow the Curzon line. Although this proposal would make no difference to the actual situation, it would greatly help him to secure acceptance of the settlement by his own people. The Prime Minister and Mr. Eden therefore

¹ Mr. Eden ended his report on the talks: 'And so at this time, after endless hours of the stiffest negotiations I have ever known, it looks as though Lwow will wreck all our efforts.'

(a) C14875/8/55. (b) C14223/8/55. (c) C14281/8/55.

submitted another revised draft on these lines to the Polish Ministers during the afternoon of October 16. They accepted the draft and the Prime Minister undertook to try to persuade Stalin to agree to it.

M. Mikolajczyk proposed that instead of meeting the members of the National Committee he should ask Stalin (if he accepted the draft) for an interview. He would say that he wished his new Government to be composed of persons acceptable to Stalin, and ask him to name leading Communists (M. Bierut or others) with whom he should get into touch. The Prime Minister welcomed this plan, and promised to assist M. Mikolajczyk in obtaining an interview and to give him his full support in his discussions.

- The text of the proposed declaration now read: 'The British and
- (a) Soviet Governments, upon the conclusion of discussions at Moscow in October 1944 between themselves and with the Polish Government, have reached the following agreement....' Then followed a statement that the new western frontier of Poland would include Danzig, regions of East Prussia south and west of Königsberg, the administrative district of Opeln and, without more precise definition, 'land desired by Poland to the east of the line of the Oder'. 'It is further agreed that possession of these territories shall be guaranteed to Poland by the Soviet and British Governments... In consideration of the foregoing agreement, the Polish Government accept the Curzon line as the line of demarcation between Poland and the U.S.S.R.....' Then followed a clause regulating the transfer and repatriation of the population of the areas concerned.

'It is agreed that a Polish Government of National Unity under Prime Minister Mikolajczyk will be set up at once in territory already liberated by Russian arms. The Soviet Government... reaffirm their unchanging policy of supporting the establishment, within the territorial limits set forth, of a sovereign, independent Poland, free in every way to manage its own affairs, and their intention to make a treaty of durable friendship and mutual aid with the Polish Government which, it is understood, will be established on an anti-fascist and democratic basis.'

The draft concluded with a statement safeguarding the existing treaties between Poland and other countries.

- (b) In the afternoon of October 16 the Prime Minister showed this revised draft to Stalin. Stalin said that he could not accept it and that the Poles must agree to the Curzon line as the frontier and not merely as the line of demarcation. He also objected to the reference to 'Prime Minister Mikolajczyk'; he was willing to support the appointment of M. Mikolajczyk but could not agree to expressing the fact in this particular way. The Prime Minister was unable to

(a) C14222, 14281/8/55. (b) C14451, 14331/8/55.

persuade Stalin to change his view. Stalin indeed said that he and M. Molotov were the only members of the Soviet Government who wanted to deal 'softly' with M. Mikolajczyk.

Mr. Eden therefore saw M. Mikolajczyk and M. Romer on the following morning. M. Mikolajczyk said that he could not state his acceptance of the Curzon line as a final settlement without losing control not only of his followers in London, but also of the Polish troops and the people of Poland. Hence the result would only be chaos. Nevertheless, before leaving Moscow, he wanted to try to reach an agreement with M. Bierut on the other issues and also to speak to Stalin. If he could come to terms on everything except the frontier, he might persuade his colleagues to accept the Curzon line. He had intended to go at once to Lublin and set up his Government there, but, in view of Stalin's refusal to agree to a line of demarcation, he would now have to return to London in order to prepare public opinion for the surrender which he would have to make on the frontier question.

Mr. Eden agreed with this proposed line of action, and the Prime Minister asked Stalin to see M. Mikolajczyk. Before his interview (a) with Stalin M. Mikolajczyk had a meeting with M. Bierut. He found M. Bierut ready to be accommodating over the constitutional issue and willing to discuss the formation of a united Government, though he held out for a majority of seats. M. Mikolajczyk also thought that Stalin was ready in principle to agree to the representation of the five major Polish political parties in a new Government, with an equal division of office between the supporters of the London Government and those of the Committee. M. Mikolajczyk was encouraged by his interview and decided to return at once to London. The Prime Minister again impressed on him that he must try to get back to Moscow and to set up a Government at Lublin as soon as possible.¹

On his return to London M. Mikolajczyk found greater difficulty even than he had expected in persuading the Polish Cabinet and the

¹ Neither the British nor the Polish documents (*Documents on Polish-Soviet Relations 1939-45*, II (Sikorski Institute, 1969), docs. 237-45 and notes, especially to doc. 242) give a complete account of these conversations. The two sets of reports are in general agreement, with some differences of detail. Thus in the Polish account the meeting with Mr. Churchill and Mr. Eden on October 14 is said to have been resumed after a luncheon interval and broken off somewhat abruptly, when Mr. Churchill was called to see Stalin, without any agreement that Mr. Churchill should present his proposed formula to Stalin. The Polish documents do not mention Mr. Churchill's talk with Stalin in the afternoon of October 14. They also refer only in the note to doc. 242 to the meetings with British Ministers on October 15 and 16. In this note M. Mikolajczyk is said to have suggested on October 15 (p.m.) a return to the formula of a 'demarcation line', whereas in the British documents he is said to have made this suggestion on the morning of October 16.

(a) C14453/8/55.

- Polish Underground leaders who had escaped capture at Warsaw to accept the terms of the draft declaration. The main obstacle was the final acceptance of the Curzon line, though there was also opposition
- (a) to fusion with the National Committee. At a meeting with the Prime Minister on October 26 M. Mikolajczyk said that he could not promise that he would be able to carry his people with him, but that he proposed to send to Stalin a list of names which he thought would be acceptable to the Russians for a new Government. He thought that, if he could head the Government, the question of its composition would somehow be settled.

The Prime Minister said that in his last conversation with Stalin he had asked him what his ideas were about the fusion of the Polish Government with the National Committee. Stalin did not give a very definite answer; he seemed to imply that, if M. Mikolajczyk were to head the Government, the National Committee would want more than half the seats in it. Mr. Churchill said that a Prime Minister must have a majority in his own Government, and that, if M. Mikolajczyk were to be a friend of Russia, Stalin must allow him a fair chance. Stalin did not seem to contradict this view, but gave no clear assent.¹

Mr. Churchill thought it essential for M. Mikolajczyk to return at once to Moscow. If he said that, although he did not agree with the frontier settlement, he was bound to accept it, he might claim a fifty-fifty proportion of the seats in the Government. M. Mikolajczyk explained that the question at issue was not merely the number of seats but the actual offices to be held by either party. The Ministry of the Interior, for example, would be of the greatest importance when the N.K.V.D. came into Poland.

M. Mikolajczyk also asked that, in the statement which the Prime Minister proposed to make in the House of Commons, he would say something about the future independence and freedom of Poland. On October 27, therefore, the Prime Minister used the terms 'independent, sovereign, free Poland' in his reference to the guarantee of a settlement which he hoped would emerge from the negotiations, and which would be ratified at the Peace Conference.

- (b) On October 31 M. Romer and Count Raczynski came to inform the Foreign Office that the Polish Cabinet had not yet reached a

¹ In a telegram to President Roosevelt on October 22 the Prime Minister had said that Stalin had replied at first that he would be 'content with fifty-fifty, but had rapidly corrected himself to a worse figure'. The Prime Minister told the President that M. Molotov, in conversation with Mr. Eden, had seemed 'more comprehending', and that he (the Prime Minister) did not think that the composition of the Government would be 'an insuperable obstacle'.

(a) C14877/8/55. (b) C15070/8/55. (c) T1946/4, No. 801 (Churchill Papers/35 C14766/855).

decision. M. Romer put three questions upon which the Poles hoped for a favourable answer:

- (i) Would the British Government consider themselves bound at the Peace Conference to support the changes in the western frontier of Poland even if the United States disagreed with them?
- (ii) Were the British Government in favour of an extension of the Polish frontier up to the line of the Oder?
- (iii) Would the British Government guarantee the independence and integrity of the new Poland?

The War Cabinet considered these questions on November 1. The (a) Prime Minister said that the United States Government could not be quoted as agreeing to the frontier changes because treaty-making power was reserved to the Senate, but that the President and the State Department appeared strongly to favour the proposed western frontier. In any case there was no reason why we should not say that we and the Russians were in agreement. On the second question we could also say that, although we realised the magnitude of the transfer of population involved in such a change, we favoured the Oder line unless the Poles themselves should wish for a smaller territorial compensation in the west. The third point was one of immediate difficulty. The Prime Minister thought that we should give a joint guarantee with the U.S.S.R. and, if possible, the United States. The guarantee would differ from that of 1939 in that it would recognise a situation reached by agreement between the two parties and that this agreement would be confirmed by the Peace Conference. The guarantee had also to be considered against the background of the proposed World Organisation which was intended to ensure respect for frontiers and maintain peace and good fellowship between the nations.

It was suggested in the discussion that our guarantee should be operative only until the proposed World Organisation had been established and our responsibilities under the guarantee had been merged in the larger guarantees afforded by the Organisation. Another point made in the discussion was that if, during the period of operation of a joint Anglo-Soviet guarantee, Russia were to attack Poland, the guarantee would no longer be binding on us. If, also, we offered a guarantee, and the Soviet-Polish negotiations nevertheless broke down, the position would remain as at present and the whole matter would have to be considered at the Peace Conference.

A further question arose out of the reasons which M. Romer had put forward in asking for a guarantee. M. Romer had said that it was

(a) WM(44)143, C.A.

essential for M. Mikolajczyk to command a majority in any government which he might form. He (M. Romer) was afraid that, after the Poles had accepted the Curzon line, and had come to Moscow for the discussion of other matters, they might find themselves at Stalin's mercy and that M. Mikolajczyk would not get his majority. The Prime Minister told the War Cabinet that M. Mikolajczyk had suggested that there might be one arrangement to save the prestige of the Soviet Government, and another private understanding between the Poles, whereby some of the members on the Lublin Committee's list would be satisfactory to M. Mikolajczyk. Thus the latter would in fact have a larger number of supporters in the new Government than would appear from the lists. The Lublin Committee had asked for 75 per cent of the places in the new Government. During his talks with Stalin the Prime Minister had contested this number, and had suggested that M. Mikolajczyk should have at least half the places.

The Prime Minister did not think that a satisfactory arrangement could be reached until after the frontier question had been settled. Even then there might be a breakdown over the constitution of the new Government, but the Poles would be in a much stronger position than on the frontier question since they would have British and probably American support.

- (a) With the approval of the War Cabinet, therefore, the Foreign Office informed M. Romer on November 2 that our answer to his first and second questions was 'yes' and that we would give a joint guarantee with the Soviet Government, and, if possible, with the United States, on the terms which the Prime Minister had suggested, and lasting until the effective establishment of a World Organisation. M. Romer was also told that the War Cabinet realised the risks of accepting the frontier settlement before an arrangement had been made about the composition of the new Government, but that if negotiations broke down over the latter question the Poles would have British and probably American support.
- (b) On the evening of November 2 the Prime Minister saw M. Mikolajczyk, M. Romer and Count Raczynski. The discussion ranged over the subjects raised in M. Romer's questions. The Prime Minister strongly urged M. Mikolajczyk not to delay any longer, since the friendly atmosphere created at Moscow was already cooling. M. Mikolajczyk said that he could not go to Moscow until his colleagues had reached an agreement among themselves and that they hesitated about accepting the Curzon line. They had also wanted to consult the United States Government. President Roosevelt had now sent a message that the matter was under

(a) C15191/8/55. (b) C15255/8/55.

consideration, and that he hoped to send another message soon.¹ The Prime Minister pointed out the risks of delay, and said that he would be unable to give further help unless the Polish Government came to a definite decision about the Curzon line, since otherwise the Russians would set up the National Committee as the Polish Government after their armies had advanced over the whole of Poland.

While they were urging the Poles to accept the proposed settlement at once, the British Ministers were also resisting pressure from the Soviet side to take action which would have implied recognition of the National Committee as the Government of Poland. On October 28 the Soviet Embassy had given to the Foreign Office a note from (a) the Soviet Government requesting the substitution of the National Committee for the Polish Government in London as the Polish representatives at the Conference on European Inland Transport. M. Gusev came to the Foreign Office on October 31 to ask for an answer to this note. Mr. Law told him that he could not yet give an official answer but that it seemed to him very extraordinary that at a time when the Prime Minister and Stalin were working to bring about a Polish-Soviet agreement, and an agreement between the Polish Government and the National Committee, the Soviet Government should make a proposal which would clearly wreck all chance of such agreements.

M. Gusev said that it was no less extraordinary that the National Committee, which was the sole authority in a great part of Poland, should have no say in very important matters affecting Polish interests. Mr. Law said that the most important thing was to get in Poland a Government acceptable to the Russians, to ourselves, and to the Polish people. As long as there were any chance of success in this attempt it would be foolish to raise issues of the kind brought forward in the Soviet note.

The Prime Minister, in a message of November 5 to Stalin, (b) explained the Polish delay as due to their wish to consult the United States. The Prime Minister said that he had not changed his own attitude, and that the British Government would support the Soviet frontier claims at any Armistice or Peace Conference. Stalin replied that M. Mikolajczyk was losing much valuable time and thereby (c) diminishing his chances.

¹ The Presidential election was taking place on November 7. The State Department had made it clear to the Polish Ambassador that M. Mikolajczyk was unlikely to get an answer until after that date.

(a) C15174/8/55. (b) T2064/4 (Churchill Papers/355, C15341/8/55). (c) T2110/4 (Churchill Papers/355, C15642 8.55).

(a) The Foreign Office continued to point out to the Polish Government the dangers of delay. M. Romer and Count Raczynski told Sir A. Cadogan on November 16 that the Polish Government were hoping very shortly for an answer to the three questions which they had put to the United States Government. They had asked (i) whether the United States would accept, or at least not oppose the proposed new frontiers of Poland;¹ (ii) whether they would promise to do all in their power to advocate and support the maintenance of Polish independence; the Polish Government knew that a binding guarantee was not possible; (iii) whether they would promise to assist the new Poland e.g. in the exchange of populations, or in economic matters through Lend-Lease or other arrangements. M. Czechanowski, the Polish Ambassador in Washington, had the impression that the American answers would be favourable but that President Roosevelt would not commit himself before he had held a meeting with the Prime Minister and Stalin. M. Romer said that M. Mikolajczyk was willing, if necessary, to go to Washington at once for discussions. Sir A. Cadogan hoped that this would not be necessary, since a further delay would increase the danger of Russian unilateral action. M. Romer said, however, that M. Grabski had had a satisfactory conversation with M. Lebedev before the latter had left for Moscow (about November 15) and had explained that the delay on the Polish side was due only to the necessity of finding out the American attitude to the proposals under discussion.

(b) On November 22 Mr. Harriman brought from Washington a letter for M. Mikolajczyk from President Roosevelt. The President wrote that the United States Government wanted a strong, free and independent Poland. They would accept an arrangement for the Polish frontiers approved by the Polish, Soviet and British Governments. They could not give a guarantee of any specific frontiers, but were working for a World Security Organisation in which they and other States would assume responsibility for general security, including the inviolability of agreed frontiers. They would also facilitate an exchange of populations in the new Poland and assist as far as was practicable in the post-war economic reconstruction of the Polish State. Mr. Harriman told M. Mikolajczyk that, if he so desired, he (Mr. Harriman) was authorised to make yet another attempt to induce the Russians to allow Poland to retain Lwow.

On the following day M. Mikolajczyk explained to Mr. Harriman that he did not feel able to ask him to speak to Stalin about Lwow. His reason was that, even if Lwow were included in Polish territory,

¹ It is not clear whether M. Romer or Count Raczynski explained that M. Mikolajczyk had put forward to the United States Government the reasons for the Polish claim to Lwow.

(a) C15903/8/55. (b) C16376, 16359/8/55.

his colleagues were not prepared to make an arrangement with the Soviet Government. In these circumstances, and since he had no support for his policy except from the members of his own Peasant Party in the Polish Government, he had decided to resign.

Mr. Harriman asked M. Mikolajczyk whether he might report the conversation to the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden. M. Mikolajczyk answered that normally he would have preferred to have spoken in person to the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden but that he did not object to Mr. Harriman reporting what he had said. M. Mikolajczyk, in fact, submitted his resignation on November 24 to the President of Poland before consulting the Prime Minister or Mr. Eden.

On November 24 M. Romer gave Sir O. O'Malley an account of (a) M. Mikolajczyk's reasons for resignation. He said that he and M. Mikolajczyk were alone in wishing to take advantage of Mr. Harriman's offer. Their colleagues did not believe in the good faith of the Soviet Government. They thought it likely that, if M. Mikolajczyk went back to Moscow, and even if he succeeded in forming a new Government including members of the Lublin Committee, a split would soon occur (or be made to occur by the Russians); M. Mikolajczyk and his associates would then be described as Fascists and reactionaries, and would be driven from office, and probably liquidated. The parties opposed to M. Mikolajczyk also thought it impossible to get the support of the Polish population for a policy which meant the abandonment of one half of Poland to the Russians in return for promises which might never be carried into effect. Furthermore, if the territorial cessions (including Lwow) were carried out, Polish resentment would be so great that all hope of genuine friendliness in relations with the U.S.S.R. would have to be abandoned.

M. Romer told Sir O. O'Malley that, although neither he nor M. Mikolajczyk felt that these arguments could easily be set aside, they would have preferred to ask Mr. Harriman to make the proposed representations in Moscow, and thereafter to go back to Poland and try to form a Government even if the representations in Moscow had been unsuccessful. They realised the immense risks of such a course but regarded them as less dangerous than the alternative, i.e. the mass deportation to Siberia of the best elements of the Polish population and the destruction of the spirit of the nation.

M. Mikolajczyk, however, thought it neither right nor wise to start on his own policy unless Polish opinion were fairly solidly behind him, and unless he had the firm support of the British and American Governments. The debates in the Polish Cabinet had shown that he was in a minority; the question of British and American

(a) C16359/8/55.

guarantees was for the moment hardly worth pursuing. M. Mikolajczyk had therefore resigned. The President of Poland had not so far definitely accepted his resignation and was unlikely to do so at once. M. Romer said that M. Mikolajczyk wished to explain the situation in person to Mr. Eden.

(iii)

Formation of a new Polish Government in London: President Roosevelt's message to Stalin: the Prime Minister's speech of December 15: public statement by the United States Government on the Polish question: Soviet recognition of the Lublin Committee (November 27, 1944-January 5, 1945).

- (a) Sir O. O'Malley, in a memorandum of November 27 to the Foreign Office, summed up the main reasons why M. Mikolajczyk had wished to return at once to Moscow and to try to form a Government in Poland. He thought that if he did not accept the Curzon line now, in return for British and American assurances of compensation in the west up to the Oder, Poland would lose her eastern provinces without sufficient acquisitions in the west in which to settle her population. The rural population, especially in Galicia, was overcrowded before the war. The loss of the eastern provinces would mean an influx of 4-5,000,000, two-thirds of whom would be rural.

If M. Mikolajczyk went back to Poland, he thought that he could put to good use the national energy which was now being employed negatively in opposition to the Russian-sponsored National Committee. On the other hand, if no agreement were reached with the U.S.S.R., the Russians would be free to communise Poland. Their technique for doing so was formidable, and could be exercised more successfully in a Poland which would not be receiving British and American economic assistance. The position of the Poles outside Poland, and especially those in the armed services, would be very difficult. Apart from those in the services and in Great Britain, there were the Poles deported to Russia, some two millions in France, Germany and Belgium, and many others elsewhere in Europe. There was no hope of relieving the women and children, or of re-establishing the morale of the men without an agreement with Russia which had British and American approval. M. Romer told Sir O. O'Malley that he understood the risks of taking German territory up to the Oder, but that in his view German resentment at this additional loss of territory would not be much worse than the Poles would have to meet in any case when the Germans had to surrender most of East Prussia, Danzig and Upper Silesia.

(a) C16408/8/55.

Mr. Eden saw M. Mikolajczyk and M. Romer on November 27. (a) He said that we could not give effective support to Poland if a Polish Government were in office with a policy opposed to an accommodation with Russia on terms which the Russians would accept. We should treat such a Government correctly, but our relations with it would no longer be intimate. Mr. Eden thought that the best solution of the crisis would be the retirement of the President and the appointment of another President who would ask M. Mikolajczyk to return to office. M. Mikolajczyk said that this course was impracticable; he would be accused not only of ejecting General Sosnkowski and abandoning Lwow, but of getting rid of his own President.

On the following day the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden had an (b) interview with the two Polish Ministers. The Prime Minister said that M. Mikolajczyk's decision to resign was wise; he would probably return to power in a short time and would then be in a much stronger position. Meanwhile we should treat coldly, but correctly, any other Polish Cabinet. There would be no change in our desire to see a strong and independent Poland. We should also continue our policy of dropping supplies in Poland. He hoped that M. Mikolajczyk would remain in close touch with us, but that he would avoid doing or saying anything which might be used to suggest that he was a protégé of the British Government.

The Foreign Office had suggested that the Prime Minister should (c) send a message to Stalin explaining our attitude in view of M. Mikolajczyk's resignation. The Prime Minister thought it unnecessary to do anything. His idea was that we should just leave the Poles (d) alone, and that the new administration would not last very long. Sir A. Clark Kerr had feared a 'head-on collision' with Stalin if we (e) recognised a new Polish Government. Mr. Churchill saw no reason to expect such a development. We had 100,000 Poles fighting for us very bravely: their legal attachment was to the President of Poland; they were unlikely to give any allegiance to the Lublin Committee, whatever other recognition this Committee might obtain.

At his interview with M. Mikolajczyk, however, Mr. Churchill agreed to send a message to Stalin. He said in his message that a change of Polish Prime Ministers could not affect our formal (f) relations with the Polish Government or our wish to see the reconstruction of a strong and independent Poland. We had practical matters, especially with regard to the Polish armed forces under our operational command, to handle with the Polish Government. Our attitude towards them would be correct but cold; we should do all in our power to ensure that their activities did not endanger the unity between the Allies. We did not expect the new Government to

(a) C16409/8/55. (b) C16467/8/55. (c) C16524/8/55. (d) C16777/8/55. (e) C16310/8/55. (f) T2229/4 (Churchill Papers/355; C16778/8/55).

last long. M. Mikolajczyk would probably come back to office with increased prestige and with the necessary powers to carry through the programme discussed at Moscow. This result would have advantages since M. Mikolajczyk would have shown by his resignation that he was a supporter of good relations between Poland and the U.S.S.R. Mr. Churchill therefore hoped that Stalin would agree that we and the Soviet Government should try to prevent the Poles in London and the National Committee at Lublin from taking steps likely to increase the tension and add to M. Mikolajczyk's difficulties in the event of his return to office.

- (a) A new Polish Government was formed on November 29 with M. Tomasz Arciszewski as Prime Minister. The Soviet press commented unfavourably on the new Administration in terms suggesting that they might be preparing to recognise the National Committee as a Government. On December 8, in a reply to the Prime Minister's message, Stalin said that M. Mikolajczyk was now clearly unable to help in the solution of Polish affairs, and that his conversations with the National Committee merely served as a cover for the criminal terrorists who were working behind his back against the Soviet forces in Poland. The Soviet Government could not accept a situation in which these terrorists were killing Russians. The Polish ministerial changes in London were not of serious interest; there was still the same process of marking time by people who had lost touch with their fellow-countrymen in Poland. On the other hand the National Committee had been notably successful in strengthening its national democratic organisations on Polish territory, carrying out land reforms for the benefit of the peasants, and broadening the organisation of its Polish forces. Stalin therefore thought that we should now support the Committee and all those who were able and willing to work with them.
- (d) The Prime Minister sent a short reply on December 10 that we must ensure that our 'permanent and loyal relations' were not disturbed by the 'awkward movement of subordinate events'. He said that he would be telegraphing later about Polish matters after he had seen Mr. Eden.

On December 15 the Prime Minister made a full statement in the House of Commons on the Soviet-Polish question, and on our attitude towards the proposed frontier settlement both in the east and west of Poland. He said that, hitherto, the American attitude had not been stated with such precision as our own, but that the United

(a) C16591/119/55. (b) C16766/8/55. (c) T2303/4 (Churchill Papers/355; C17290/8/55).
 (d) T2308/4 (Churchill Papers/355; C17290/8/55).

States Government had not disagreed with our own view at any point in the long series of negotiations.¹

An American statement soon followed the Prime Minister's speech. After his re-election Mr. Roosevelt was more able to define the policy of the United States Government. He telegraphed to the (a) Prime Minister on December 15 asking for his opinion on the situation, and suggesting that he (the President) might send a message to Stalin proposing that he should delay action on the Polish question until he had discussed it personally at the proposed meeting of the three Heads of Governments. The Prime Minister replied on December 16 accepting the President's suggestion and asking him (b) to telegraph at once to Stalin, in view of the possibility of an immediate Russian move to recognise the Lublin Committee.

On December 17 therefore the President sent a message to Stalin (c) that, owing to the interest aroused in the United States by the Prime Minister's speech, and the strong pressure upon the United States Government to make known their position with regard to Poland, he might find it necessary to make a public statement on the matter. The statement would be on the following lines: (i) The United States Government stood unequivocally for a strong, free, independent, and democratic Poland. (ii) Although considering it desirable that territorial questions should await the general post-war settlement, the United States Government, in the interest of the common war effort, would not object to an immediate settlement by agreement of the territorial questions involved in the Polish situation, including the proposed compensation from Germany. (iii) The United States would assist in an exchange of population in the areas concerned, and, as far as practicable, in the economic reconstruction of Poland as of other devastated countries.

President Roosevelt then said in his message that it was of the highest importance that, until he and Stalin and the Prime Minister had been able to meet for discussion, nothing should be done to render such discussion more difficult. The President had seen indications that the Lublin Committee might be intending to give itself the status of a provisional Government of Poland. He realised that the Russians wanted a clarification of Polish authority before their armies moved further into Poland. On the other hand he hoped

¹ This statement was made in the course of a debate on British policy with regard to Poland. The Prime Minister, in defending his policy, criticised the Poles for missing their opportunity. He praised M. Mikolajczyk's attempts to deal with the 'obstinate and inflexible resistance of his London colleagues' and described him and his supporters as 'the only light which burns for Poland in the immediate future'. *Parl. Deb., 5th Ser., H. of C.*, Vol. 406, cols. 1478-89.

(a) T2366/4, No. 674 (Churchill Papers/355; C17519/8/55). (b) T2369/4, No. 853 (Churchill Papers/355; C17519/8/55). (c) T2378/4, Roosevelt to Churchill No. 675 (Churchill Papers/355; C17730/8/55).

very much that, in view of the great political implications of such a step, Stalin would not recognise the Lublin Committee before the three-Power meeting. The President hoped that a meeting would take place immediately after his inauguration on January 20, 1945.

- (a) On December 16 the Prime Minister telegraphed to the President that, at the time of M. Mikolajczyk's resignation, he had expected him to return very soon to office. There seemed no longer any immediate prospect of such a development. Most of the Poles in London had accepted M. Arciszewski *faute de mieux*, and were in a fatalistic mood expecting something to turn up. This mood would probably not be lasting; M. Mikolajczyk's return to power might be possible in the New Year. The Prime Minister also said that we did not regard the Lublin Committee as in any way representative of Polish opinion, and did not at present propose to recognise it.
- (b) The War Cabinet had suggested on December 16 that it might be desirable for the Prime Minister to send a message to Stalin. In view of the President's message, Mr. Eden thought it better to say nothing until the proposed three-Power meeting.
- (c) Lord Halifax telegraphed to the Foreign Office on the night of December 17-18 the proposed text of the public statement by the United States Government. This statement differed from the terms of the message to Stalin in that it did not mention the proposed 'compensation' to Poland at the expense of Germany. Lord Halifax was therefore instructed to say that the Prime Minister regarded a reference to this aspect of the question as of great importance. The statement was issued, however, without direct reference to the compensation.
- (d) Stalin replied to the President's message on December 27. He argued at some length that evidence in the Russian possession showed M. Mikolajczyk's negotiations in Moscow with the National Committee to have been used as a screen for the 'criminal terrorist' activities of anti-Soviet Poles working without M. Mikolajczyk's knowledge.¹ The changes in the Polish 'émigré government' had made matters worse, and had 'created a precipice' between Poland and this 'émigré Government'. On the other hand the Polish National Committee had been doing good work in strengthening the Polish State and Administration, expanding and organising the Polish Army, and carrying through a number of important measures, such as agrarian reform. These activities had consolidated the democratic forces in Poland and established the authority of the Committee

¹ Stalin's words, as translated, were 'from behind M. Mikolajczyk's back', and might therefore mean 'screened by M. Mikolajczyk'.

(a) T2375/4, No. 854 (Churchill Papers/355; C17520/8/55). (b) WM(44)169, C.A. (c) C17458, 17732/826/55. (d) T2444/4, Roosevelt to Churchill No. 681 (Churchill Papers/355, N308,6/55, 1945).

among 'wide masses' in Poland and 'wide social Polish circles abroad'.

Stalin considered that we should support the Committee and all who would work with it. The question of day-to-day relations with Poland was of special importance to the Soviet Union which was bearing the whole burden of liberating the country from the Germans. Stalin therefore said frankly that if the Committee were to transform itself into a Provisional Polish Government, the Soviet Government would have no serious reason for postponing a decision to recognise it.¹ There were, on the other hand, no reasons for continuing the support of the 'émigré Government' which had lost the confidence of the Polish population and was causing a threat of civil war in the rear of the Red Army. Stalin thought that

'it would be natural, just and profitable for our common cause if the Governments of the Allied countries as a first step agreed on an immediate exchange of representatives with the National Committee, so that, after a certain time, it would be recognised as the lawful Government of Poland after the transformation of the National Committee into a Provisional Government of Poland'.

A copy of this message was received in London on December 29, and considered by the War Cabinet on December 30. The Prime Minister (a) regretted that the Polish Government had missed the opportunity of the Moscow discussions. He considered, however, that we should continue to press Stalin not to recognise the National Committee as a Government; that we should tell him plainly that we should not do so, and that in our view the matter should be reserved for the forthcoming three-Power conference.

The War Cabinet agreed with the Prime Minister's view. The Prime Minister also said that we ought to reconsider the existing arrangements under which Poles in the Polish air force in Italy were allowed to drop arms and supplies to the Underground forces in Poland.² The aircraft now passed over Russian-occupied territory. There was a risk that they might be shot down; in any case the flights were against the declared policy of the Russians. The importance of the flights in terms of supplies dropped was probably not very great, though they had a value from the point of view of the morale of the Polish forces fighting with the Allies. These forces had done valiant service. If it were found impossible for substantial elements in

¹ In fact the Russians were securing by their usual method 'resolutions' from meetings organised by their Polish puppets in favour of this transformation. These 'resolutions', again in the usual Russian technique, were published in the Soviet press as evidence of the wishes of the Russian people.

² These flights had been continued to other parts of Poland at M. Mikolajczyk's urgent request after the collapse of the Warsaw rising.

(a) (WM44)176.1, C.A.; N166/6/55.

them to go back to Poland, or if they were unwilling to do so, we should have to consider whether they could be settled in the British Empire, or possibly in the United States.

- (a) Mr. Churchill telegraphed the views of the War Cabinet to
 (b) President Roosevelt on December 30. The President replied to Stalin that he was 'disturbed and deeply disappointed' at his refusal to hold over the question of recognising the National Committee until the three-Power meeting. The President thought that a delay of a month would have caused no serious inconvenience. He had not proposed that the Soviet Government should curtail their practical relations with the National Committee or that they should deal with or accept the London Government in its present form. The President had merely urged delay because he thought that Stalin would realise the unfortunate and serious consequences which would result from the recognition of one Polish Government by the Russians while the majority of the United Nations, including the United States and Great Britain, continued to recognise another Government.

The President added:

'I must tell you with a frankness equal to your own that I see no prospect of this [i.e. the United States] Government following suit and transferring its recognition from the Government in London to the Lublin Committee in its present form. This is in no sense due to any special ties or feelings for the London Government. The fact is that neither the Government nor the people of the United States have as yet seen any evidence arising from the manner of its creation or from subsequent developments to justify the conclusion that the Lublin Committee as at present constituted represents the people of Poland.'

Only a small fraction of Poland proper west of the Curzon line had as yet been liberated and the Polish people had had no opportunity to express themselves in regard to the Lublin Committee. If, after the liberation of Poland, a provisional Government with popular support were established, the attitude of the United States would be governed by the decision of the Polish people. Mr. Roosevelt then went on to say that he regarded M. Mikolajczyk as the 'only Polish leader in sight who seems to offer the possibility of a genuine solution of the difficult and dangerous Polish question'. Mr. Roosevelt found it 'most difficult to believe' that M. Mikolajczyk had knowledge of any terrorist instructions.

- (c) On December 31 the Soviet Government announced that the

(a) T2449/4, No. 864 (Churchill Papers 355; N92 6/55). (b) T2454/4, Roosevelt to Churchill No. 684 (Churchill Papers 355; N309 6/55). (c) N6 6/55.

National Committee had decided to transform itself into a Provisional Government of Poland and that the Committee had been recognised as a Provisional Government by the U.S.S.R. The Polish Government in London issued a strong counter-statement denying the authority of the Committee and all claims made by it to be representative of Polish opinion.

Stalin replied to President Roosevelt on January 1, 1945, that he (a) regretted his inability to convince the President of the correctness of the Soviet attitude to the Polish question. He thought, however, that events would show that the National Committee had always rendered, and would continue to render to the Allies, and in particular to the Red Army, considerable assistance against the Germans, whereas the *émigré* Government were assisting the Germans by creating disorganisation. Stalin wrote that he could not delay for a month recognition of the Committee as a Provisional Government, since on December 27, 1944, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. had informed the Committee of its willingness to grant this recognition as soon as the Provisional Government had been formed.

M. Gusev gave the Foreign Office a copy of this message on January 4. He also brought a message to the same effect from Stalin to the Prime Minister. In this message Stalin referred to the proposed (b) three-Power meeting, and said that he would be glad to see the Prime Minister and the President on Russian territory for the meeting.

The Prime Minister replied on January 5 that he and his colleagues (c) were distressed at the course which events were taking, and that the best thing would be to hold a joint discussion of the matter not as an isolated problem but in relation to the world situation during the war and the transition to peace. Meanwhile the British attitude would remain unchanged, i.e. we should continue to recognise the London Government.

(iv)

British discussions with the Polish Government and M. Mikolajczyk: Foreign Office view of the situation: Mr. Eden's conversation with Mr. Stettinius at Malta (January 5-February 1, 1945).

Between the announcement of the Soviet recognition of the Polish National Committee and the three-Power meeting at Yalta the Foreign Office considered what could be done to alleviate the Polish-Soviet situation. On January 5 Sir S. Cripps sent to the (d) Foreign Office a proposal made to him by M. Retinger, a Polish Socialist leader who supported M. Mikolajczyk, suggesting that Mr.

(a) T28/5, Roosevelt to Churchill No. 697 (Churchill Papers/356; N310/6/55).
 (b) T27/5 (Churchill Papers/356; N310/6/55). (c) T32/5 (Churchill Papers/356; N257/6/55). (d) N307, 533/6/55.

Eden should summon a meeting of Poles of all parties and urge them to form a broad and representative Government in London. Mr. Eden discussed this proposal with M. Retinger on January 9. M. Retinger said that the Polish internal differences were so acute that only intervention from the British side could bring about a coalition. Mr. Eden explained that, although he wished to help M. Retinger, he had to think of the effect upon the Russians of any such British initiative.

The Foreign Office view was that we should not give the appearance of challenging Stalin by going out of our way to build up a new Polish Government in London as a rival to the Lublin Government. If the Poles in London themselves decided to strengthen their Government, we should approve of their action, but it was doubtful whether at this stage an agreement could be reached between any Polish Government in London and the Lublin Government. It might therefore be better for us to try to 'penetrate' into the Lublin Government by arranging for M. Mikolajczyk and others favourable to a Soviet-Polish understanding to go to Lublin while the Government there would still put a value on the knowledge, experience, and influence which they could provide.

Mr. Eden asked M. Mikolajczyk on January 11 for his views. M. Mikolajczyk thought that a change of Government would not be enough. The essential thing was that a new Government should be firmly committed to a practical programme for renewing discussions with the Russians. Mr. Eden said that he did not think it desirable for him to intervene, but that he would welcome a more representative Polish Government with a policy likely to lead to a resumption of discussions with the Soviet Government at the three-Power Conference.

- (a) During the next fortnight the Poles took no steps to form a new Government but the different sections of Polish opinion in London put forward various proposals for discussion at the Conference. The Polish Government presented to the Foreign Office on January 23 (and also published in outline) a memorandum based on the thesis that the frontier question should be held over for future settlement. The Polish Government would agree to any method of settlement provided by international law. They were determined to conclude an alliance with the U.S.S.R. and to collaborate closely with the Soviet Government within the framework of a universal international Security Organisation and an economic organisation of the States of central and eastern Europe. In view of the sacrifices and losses of Poland, amounting nearly to one-fifth of her population, they could not recognise decisions reached unilaterally.

(a) N1038/6/55.

The Polish Government suggested that, if the Soviet Government would not agree to a settlement, a military Inter-Allied Commission should be set up to act in Poland and that the local Polish administration should function under its control until the resumption of authority by the legitimate Government. After the return of this Government and of the Polish nationals now outside the country, free elections would be held to decide on a new Government. Meanwhile the Polish Government hoped that at the three-Power Conference the British Government would not agree to decisions concerning Poland without the participation and consent of the Polish Government, and that they would not recognise a puppet Government in the country, since such recognition would mean the abolition of the independence of Poland in the defence of which the war had begun.

Sir A. Cadogan told the Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs on (a) January 26 that the Russians were not likely to accept either the adjournment of the frontier question or the establishment of an Inter-Allied Commission of Control in Poland. Another solution, (b) suggested by M. Romer, was that the Soviet Government should be asked to agree, on the analogy of the Greek settlement,¹ to the establishment of a Regency or Regency Council in Poland. This Council would call a conference, and try to form a new Government including representatives of the London and Lublin Governments and of certain Polish leaders still in Poland. M. Romer said that the presence of British and American representatives in Poland was essential and that the British, American and Soviet Governments should issue a joint announcement in favour of complete Polish independence. He thought that the Poles themselves could not sign away Polish territory but that the Curzon line might be imposed on them by the three Allied Governments.

M. Mikolajczyk had a solution on somewhat similar lines. He (c) told Sir A. Cadogan on January 24 that the only possibility of preserving Polish independence lay in the formation of a new Government. It was useless to think in terms of a fusion between the London and Lublin Governments. On January 26 M. Mikolajczyk gave Mr. Eden a full statement of his views and those of his supporters (d) in Poland. On the frontier question he proposed the acceptance of the Curzon line with the variant B in Eastern Galicia (though with certain modifications in favour of Poland), and, in the west, the Oder line with the town and harbour of Stettin. M. Mikolajczyk suggested several methods of securing a representative Government in Poland to tide over the period before free elections could be held. The only

¹ See below, Chapter XLIII, section (v).

(a) N997/6/55. (b) N1038/6/55. (c) N892/6/55. (d) N996/6/55.

plan which he regarded as practicable was the immediate appointment of a Presidential Council composed of well-known representatives of politics, science, and the churches. This Council would summon a conference of representatives of the Underground movement and Council of National Unity who had remained in Poland during the war, the Lublin Provisional Government and National Council, and the Polish political parties. British, American and Soviet representatives would also be invited. The task of the conference would be to determine the parties to be represented in the new Government and the proportion of seats to be allocated to each of them; the Conference would also choose a Prime Minister who would form a Cabinet nominated by the Presidential Council.

- (a) In discussing this plan with Mr. Eden M. Mikolajczyk said that at this initial stage no Poles from outside Poland should take part in the discussions; he thought that even their lives would not be safe. He also insisted that the representatives of the Lublin Poles in the new Government should be less than 50 per cent.
- (b) In a memorandum written as a brief for the British Delegation at the Yalta Conference the Foreign Office agreed that the ultimate objective of our own policy should be to ensure free elections in Poland, and that as our first step we should try to secure Russian consent to some modification of the Lublin Government which would allow British and American recognition on a provisional basis. Otherwise the Soviet Government, through their control of the Lublin Poles, would be able to impose a completely Communist Government; they would then seal off Poland from the outside world, and trust to their own propaganda to obscure the situation sufficiently from world opinion. In other words the Russians would deal with Poland as they had dealt with the Baltic States in 1940. We had therefore to ensure that we and the Americans had representatives in Poland who would be able to report to us and, as far as possible, influence the situation in accordance with our views. We must assume that a Polish Government in London could no longer affect the situation in Poland, except indeed to increase the risks of a hopeless armed resistance to the Russians and of severe Russian and 'Lublin' reprisals against the people of Poland. We could not expect to make an agreement with the Russians as long as we continued to recognise the London Government and our representation in Poland would not be on a satisfactory basis unless we recognised a Government in the country.

We wanted to be able to transfer our recognition to a modified Lublin administration without a shock to public opinion in Great Britain and the United States, and without losing the loyalty of the

(a) N1104/6/55. (b) N1038/6/55.

Poles who were fighting with us. We could not carry opinion with us unless we were in a position to show that the Lublin Government had been widened to include adequate representation of the three Centre and Left Wing parties in Poland. M. Witos, the leader of the Peasant Party, and M. Zulawski, one of the pre-war leaders of the Socialist party, had long been in favour of collaboration with Russia, and should certainly be included. M. Mikolajczyk and, if possible, one or two other London Poles should be brought into this representation. The fewer Poles from London whom we suggested, the greater would be the chances of getting Russian agreement, but public opinion in Great Britain and the United States would certainly expect the inclusion of M. Mikolajczyk. We should also have to agree to the replacement of the 1935 constitution by the constitution of 1921. On this point we need find no difficulty; there would be an incidental advantage in that we should get rid of the present President who held office under the terms of the 1935 constitution.

We should also have to persuade the Polish parties included in the widened Lublin Government to accept the Russian frontier demands—i.e. the Curzon line with variant A in Eastern Galicia. Here we might adopt M. Romer's proposal for an Allied declaration imposing a frontier settlement; the new Polish Government would acquiesce in this declaration without signing any document at this stage.

As for the method of establishing a new Polish Government, the best plan would be to set up, as the London Government had suggested in their memorandum, an interim international authority in Poland. We might press Stalin to accept this plan, but he was unlikely to do so. M. Mikolajczyk's plan was over-elaborate and would probably not lead to an agreement among the Poles themselves. In any case his proposal for the exclusion, at least in the first stage, of all Poles outside Poland would be strongly criticised by British and American opinion and by the Polish fighting forces.

M. Romer's proposal for a Council of Regency on the Greek analogy was a more hopeful line of procedure. M. Romer had suggested as Regent, or head of the Council of Regency, Prince Sapieha, Archbishop of Cracow. Prince Sapieha was well known and respected; the Russians might accept him because he had quarrelled earlier with Marshal Pilsudski and had also stood up well to the Germans during the war. On the other hand it was doubtful whether the Russians and the Lublin Government would give so much authority to a Catholic archbishop. The 'miracle' by which both General Plastiras and E.A.M. were able to agree that Archbishop Damaskinos should rule in Greece was unlikely to repeat itself in Poland. Another solution might be that after the three Powers had

agreed on the composition of the new Government, the Russians should be left to arrange to set it up. We could accept this plan only if we and the Americans had full facilities to observe what was going on in Poland, and if the elections were held under Allied supervision.

- (a) Before the opening of the Yalta Conference M. Arciszewski, on behalf of the Polish Government, sent a letter to the Prime Minister repeating the appeal that the 'essential freedoms' should be granted to the Polish nation which had been fighting at the side of the British and American democracies. M. Arciszewski asked that nothing should be done at the Conference which might endanger the legitimate rights and independence of Poland, and that the Prime Minister should refuse to recognise any *faits accomplis* with regard to Poland.

M. Arciszewski also pointed out that the Lublin Government had declared its intention to try as traitors all soldiers of the Polish Home Army and members of the Underground movement, and that mass arrests and deportations had already taken place. He asked therefore that the Prime Minister should urge the Soviet Government, whose armies were now in occupation of the territory of Poland, to give proof that they genuinely desired an understanding with the Poles and to prevent the 'Lublin men' from carrying out their 'criminal plans'.

- The Foreign Office had information confirming M. Arciszewski's statements. They had already received a memorandum from the
- (b) Polish Government asking for British intervention to save Polish citizens from political persecution, and particularly, to ensure the safety of the members of the Underground movement and of Polish political parties, and of the officers and soldiers of the Home Army. The Foreign Office had suggested to the Polish Government that they should supply a list of names of prominent members of the Underground movement on whose behalf we might take action. The Polish Government had not wished to disclose these names but Mr. Eden said that the names would not be mentioned to the Russians. The Foreign Office considered it undesirable to send more than a formal acknowledgment of M. Arciszewski's appeal to the Prime Minister. Although the Poles concerned were in great danger, we could not hope to protect them by raising the matter with the Russians as a separate question. We could save them only by securing a wider and more tolerant administration in Poland than that of the existing Lublin Government. We might have an opportunity at the Conference of impressing upon the Russians the concern felt by British public opinion generally at the way in which the

(a) N1317/6/55. (b) N993/6/55.

Lublin Poles were treating Poles who had resisted the Germans bravely and were above all else good patriots.

It was also necessary, before meeting the Russians, to settle the British attitude to the frontier question. The War Cabinet, at a meeting on January 22, had considered the matter both in its (a) eastern and western aspects. They had received reports that Stalin might make a gesture at the Conference and agree to give back Lwow to the Poles. The Prime Minister did not exclude this possibility in spite of Stalin's previous stiffness about Lwow. In any case a gesture of this kind was less unlikely if we refrained from asking for it.

The War Cabinet thought that there would be a good deal of criticism in Labour and other circles if the Polish frontier went as far as the Oder; the internal situation in Poland would be unstable owing to the size of the German minority, and the transfer of this large German population would be almost impossible. The Prime Minister, however, was more optimistic about the transfer problem; he said that we were committed to giving the Poles, if they accepted the Curzon line, as much territory up to the Oder line as they could absorb. Mr. Eden said that the Lublin Government were asking for even more German territory, and that we ought not to go beyond our present undertaking. The Prime Minister said generally that he had always felt the question of the Polish eastern frontier to be of subordinate importance. It was certainly a matter on which we could exercise little direct influence.

'What was, on the other hand, of vital concern to Poland was that they should be re-established as a free, independent and sovereign State. We were ourselves pledged to see her so restored; the issue touched our honour, and, in fighting for it, we could rely on the support of the United States Government.'

Mr. Eden discussed the Polish question with Mr. Stettinius at a meeting at Malta on February 1, 1945. Mr. Stettinius said that the (b) United States Government could not simply recognise the Lublin Government, but must insist on some form of Council which would include M. Mikolajczyk and representatives of other sections of Polish opinion. A failure to reach a satisfactory agreement with the Russians on the matter at the forthcoming meeting would greatly disturb American opinion, especially among Catholics, and might prejudice the whole question of the participation of the United States in a post-war World Organisation. Mr. Eden said that we also could not recognise the Lublin Government. He explained M. Mikolajczyk's plan. Sir A. Cadogan, who was present at the meeting,

(a) WM(45)7-4, C.A.; Ngo8/6/55. (b) U888/888/70; WP(45)157.

thought that the Russians might think the plan too complicated. He suggested that we should ask them to agree to a new interim Government, and that we should propose a Presidential Council as one way of securing it.

- (a) On Mr. Stettinius's proposal, the British and American delegations decided to put forward notes in this sense to the Prime Minister and the President. Mr. Eden therefore drew up a note for the Prime Minister. He also referred to the frontier question. He said that the Americans might still wish to press the Russians to leave Lwow to Poland, and that the Lublin Poles, doubtless with Soviet approval, were claiming not only the territory up to the Oder, including Stettin and Breslau, but also additional territory as far west as the western Neisse.¹ We and the Americans agreed that Poland should certainly have East Prussia (excluding Königsberg), Danzig, the eastern tip of Pomerania and the whole of Upper Silesia. These cessions would involve the transfer of some 2½ million Germans. The Oder frontier, without Breslau and Stettin, would mean a transfer of another 2¼ million; the western Neisse frontier, with Breslau and Stettin, would add 3¼ million more. In October 1944 we had been willing to allow the Poles to have everything which they might claim up to the Oder, but our consent was conditional upon an agreement between M. Mikolajczyk and the Russians. There was no question in October of accepting the western Neisse frontier, and the War Cabinet were agreed that we should now oppose it.

Mr. Eden thought that we should argue that we had not accepted definite frontier lines in the west, since we need not make to the Lublin Poles the concessions which we were prepared to make to M. Mikolajczyk in order to get a settlement. Even the Oder line would strain the Polish capacity for absorption and increase the difficulties of a transfer.

(v)

The Polish question at the Yalta Conference, February 4-11, 1945.

- (b) The Polish question was discussed at seven of the eight plenary political meetings of the Conference beginning with the second meeting on February 6, and also at the meetings of the Foreign Secretaries. President Roosevelt opened the discussion at the second plenary meeting on February 6 by saying that, as he had previously stated at Teheran, he was generally in favour of the Curzon line as a frontier, but would find matters easier in relation to opinion in the

¹ There are two rivers of this name. The more westerly of the two runs northwards from the neighbourhood of Reichenberg (Liberec) to join the Oder above Frankfurt-on-Oder. The eastern Neisse joins the Oder below Oppeln.

(a) N1688/6/55. (b) WP(45)157; U1688/888/70.

United States if the Soviet Government would make some contribution to the Polish settlement. He had mentioned the city of Lwow, and there was also a question of some of the oil-bearing lands in the province of Lwow. It would be a great help if the Russians would consider some such modification at the southern end of the Curzon line as a counter-balance to the exclusion of Königsberg from the compensation which Poland would receive in East Prussia.

The President regarded the question of the future Government of Poland as the most important point. American opinion was unwilling to recognise the Lublin Government since it represented only a small section of Poland and of the Polish nation. There was a demand for the creation of a Government of National Unity; such a Government might include representatives of the five main Polish political parties. Mr. Roosevelt then put forward, as one among a number of possibilities which had been suggested, the establishment of a Presidential Council. He also mentioned that he had been greatly impressed by M. Mikolajczyk during the latter's visit to Washington.

The Prime Minister, in stating the position of the British Government, said that he had repeatedly declared in Parliament his resolution to support the Soviet claim to the Curzon line as interpreted by the Soviet Government, and including Lwow. He had been criticised for this attitude but had always taken the view that after the sufferings and achievements of Russia, the claim to the Curzon line, including Lwow, was founded not on force but on right. If, however, a strong Power like the U.S.S.R. were to make a gesture of magnanimity to a much weaker Power, and to grant some territorial concession as suggested by the President, we should both admire and acclaim their action.

The Prime Minister, however, was more interested in a strong, free, and independent Poland than in particular territorial boundaries. Stalin had also proclaimed this to be his objective, and for this reason, i.e. because he trusted Stalin's declarations, the Prime Minister did not regard the frontier question as of supreme importance. We had gone to war with Germany, at great risk, for reasons of honour, in order to secure a free and sovereign Poland; British opinion would never be content with a settlement which did not safeguard this freedom and sovereignty. There was indeed one qualification to be made to this statement. Freedom for Poland must not cover any hostile Polish design, possibly in intrigue with Germany, against the U.S.S.R. On the other hand it was inconceivable that the World Organisation which was being set up would ever tolerate such designs or leave the U.S.S.R. to take action alone against them.

The Prime Minister then turned to the question of the future Polish Government. He said that he had not seen any of the members

of the present Government in London; on the other hand we remained on terms of informal but friendly relations with MM. Mikolajczyk, Romer and Grabski. The Prime Minister thought that the three Powers would be criticised if they allowed the existence of the two Polish Governments to divide them, and that the Conference should set up an interim Government or governmental instrument which would prepare the way for a free vote of the Polish people on their future constitution and administration.

Stalin said that for Russia, as for Great Britain, Poland was a question of honour, but that it was also a question of security. Poland was a corridor through which Russia's enemies had passed to attack her. They had been able to use the corridor because Poland had been weak. Russia wanted a strong and independent Poland in order that the corridor might be closed by the Poles themselves.

Stalin pointed out that the Curzon line had not been drawn up by Russians. Lenin had not agreed to it, and had wanted to keep the town and province of Bialystok within the U.S.S.R. The Soviet Government had withdrawn from the position which Lenin had adopted, but they could not take less than Lord Curzon and M. Clemenceau had conceded to Russia in the Curzon line. Stalin said that, if he gave way on this point, the Ukrainians would consider that they had been unfairly treated. It would be better even to continue the war a little longer in order that Poland should receive compensation in the west. He proposed the western Neisse as the frontier, and asked the Conference to accept this line.

Stalin then gave his version of the negotiations with M. Mikolajczyk. The present Polish Government in London had described the Lublin Government as bandits and criminals; the Lublin Government had replied in kind, and in such circumstances it was now very difficult to bring about an agreement. The members of the Lublin Government (Stalin said that it should now be called the Warsaw Government)¹ did not want to have anything to do with the London Government. Stalin had asked them what concessions they could make. They had replied that they would take into their Government General Zeligowski and M. Grabski. They would not accept M. Mikolajczyk as Prime Minister.

Stalin was willing to ask members of the Lublin Government to come to Yalta for a discussion, but he thought it necessary to say frankly that the Provisional Government had as much democratic basis in Poland as General de Gaulle had in France. He also said that the Soviet Army needed peace and quiet, not civil war in Poland. The Lublin Government satisfied this need fairly well; the London Government, however, had agents in Poland connected with the

¹ The 'Provisional Government' had moved to Warsaw on January 18.

so-called Underground Forces of Resistance. Nothing good, but much evil came of these Underground Forces. So far the agents of the London Government had killed 212 Russian soldiers: they had raided supply dumps for arms, and had also broken the Soviet regulations about radio communication. It was thus not surprising that some of their agents had been arrested.

President Roosevelt suggested at this point that the Conference should adjourn until the following day. Mr. Churchill, however, said that he must put it on record that the British and Soviet Governments had different sources of information in Poland and had received different accounts of what had happened. According to our information the Lublin Government did not represent the views of more than a third of the Polish people. We were greatly disturbed at the danger of a collision between the Underground movement and the representatives of the Lublin Government which would result in bloodshed, arrests and deportations.

During the evening of February 6 Mr. Harriman brought to the (a) Prime Minister and Mr. Eden the draft of a letter which the President proposed to send to Stalin. Mr. Eden suggested some amendments, which the President accepted. The letter began by saying that the three Great Powers ought to have 'a meeting of minds about the political set-up in Poland'. Otherwise public opinion might assume that there was a breach between the Powers. The President was determined that there should be no such breach, and that some way of reconciliation should be found. He agreed that Stalin could not tolerate any temporary Government in Poland which would cause trouble to the Soviet armed forces as they moved to Berlin.

The President asked Stalin to believe him when he said that the American people were looking critically at what they considered a disagreement at a vital stage in the war. The American view was that, if we could not agree when our armies were converging on the common enemy, we should not get an understanding on even more vital matters in the future. The President then repeated that the United States could not recognise the Lublin Government as at present composed, and that the world would regard it as a lamentable outcome of the conference if it ended with an open and obvious breach on this issue.¹ The letter then referred to Stalin's mention of the possibility of bringing some members of the Lublin Government to Yalta. The President said that he would like to develop this proposal and to invite M. Bierut and M. Morawski from the Lublin

¹ The insertion of this sentence with regard to the Lublin Government was suggested by Mr. Eden.

(a) N1692/6/55.

Government and any two or three of a list of Poles (which he then mentioned and which included Archbishop Sapieha and M. Witos) representing other elements in the Polish people. If, as a result of the presence of these Polish leaders, we could jointly agree with them on a Provisional Government (such a Government would doubtless include MM. Mikolajczyk, Romer and Grabski),¹ the United States Government and (the President felt confidently) the British Government would then be prepared to examine with Stalin the conditions under which they would dissociate themselves from the London Government and transfer their recognition to the new Provisional Government.²

In conclusion the President repeated his assurance that the United States would never support a Provisional Government in Poland hostile to Soviet interests. He added that the interim Government would be pledged to hold free elections in Poland as soon as possible and that he knew such a pledge to be consistent with Stalin's desire for a new free and democratic Poland.

- (a) The discussion was continued at the next plenary meeting in the afternoon of February 7. President Roosevelt began by saying that he must emphasise again the very great importance of finding a solution. He was less concerned about the frontiers than about the Government of Poland. He thought it within the province of the Conference to help to set up—in fact, to set up for the Poles—an interim Government.

Stalin referred to the President's letter.³ He said that he had at once given instructions that MM. Bierut and Morawski should be found so that he could telephone to them. They were, however, at the moment, respectively in Cracow and Lodz; he would ask them, when they were found, how representatives of the other side could be reached. If M. Witos and Archbishop Sapieha could come to Yalta, matters would be easier, but he did not know their addresses, and feared that there might not be time to find them.⁴ Meanwhile M. Molotov had drawn up a document which met to some extent the proposals of the President.

¹ The reference to the inclusion of these three Polish Ministers was suggested by Mr. Eden.

² The original draft read 'would then be prepared to disassociate themselves'. Mr. Eden suggested the inclusion of the words 'to examine with you [i.e. Stalin] the conditions in which they would dissociate'.

³ He said that he had received the letter only about an hour and a half before the meeting (which began at 4 p.m.).

⁴ The British and Americans did not question this statement, though it is hardly conceivable that the Soviet authorities—if Stalin had asked them to do so—could not have discovered the whereabouts of the Archbishop of Cracow (if not M. Witos) and brought him at once to Yalta.

M. Molotov's draft was as follows:

(i) It was agreed that the Curzon line should be the eastern frontier of Poland, with adjustments in some regions of 5-8 km. in favour of Poland.

(ii) It was decided that the western frontier of Poland should be drawn from the town of Stettin (Polish) and thence southwards along the River Oder and the western Neisse.

(iii) It was considered desirable to add to the Provisional Polish Government some democratic leaders from Polish *émigré* circles.

(iv) It was considered desirable that the enlarged Provisional Polish Government should be recognised by the Allied Governments.

(v) It was considered desirable that the Provisional Polish Government, enlarged as suggested in paragraph (iii), should as soon as possible call the population of Poland to the polls for the establishment by general vote of permanent organs of the Polish Government.

(vi) M. Molotov, Mr. Harriman and Sir A. Clark Kerr were entrusted with the discussion of the question of enlarging the Provisional Polish Government and submitting their proposals for the consideration of the three Governments.'

M. Molotov said that, although they were trying to reach the Polish leaders by telephone, it was difficult to find them, and that there might not be time for them to reach the Crimea while the Conference was in session. Owing to these technical difficulties it was very improbable that the President's plan could be carried out, but his own proposals should meet the wishes of the President and the Prime Minister.

President Roosevelt thought they were making definite progress. He said that he wanted to wait until the following day in order that he might consult with Mr. Stettinius. He did not like the term *émigré*. M. Mikolajczyk was the only one of the Poles concerned whom he knew, but it was not necessary to consult *émigrés* alone; people in Poland should also be found.

The Prime Minister said that he too disliked the term *émigré*. The term had been applied by the French to persons driven out of their own country by their own people. The Poles abroad had been driven out by the Germans. The Prime Minister suggested that the words 'Poles abroad' should be substituted for *émigré*. Stalin agreed to the change.

The Prime Minister then explained that in previous talks he had always qualified the moving of the Polish frontier westwards by saying that the Poles should be free to take territory in the west, but not more than they wished or could properly manage. He also knew that a large body of opinion in Great Britain was frankly shocked at the idea of moving millions of people by force. He himself was not shocked. The transfer of Greek and Turkish populations after the first war had been successful, and the two peoples had enjoyed good

relations ever since, but the numbers concerned had been under two millions. If Poland took East Prussia and Silesia as far as the Oder, it would mean moving six million Germans back to Germany. This transfer might be managed, subject to the moral question which Mr. Churchill would have to settle with his own people.

Stalin observed that all the Germans in the areas concerned had run away. The Prime Minister said that the problem was thereby simplified but that we had to consider whether there would be room for them in what was left of Germany. Six or seven million Germans had been killed, and about another million (Stalin suggested two million) would probably be killed before the end of the war. There would then be room in Germany up to a certain point for the transferred population. The matter, however, required study from the point of view not of principle but of the numbers to be moved. The Prime Minister also proposed that the words 'and from within Poland itself' should be added to M. Molotov's third point. Stalin agreed with this addition.

At the fourth plenary meeting on February 8 President Roosevelt brought forward a revised draft of M. Molotov's proposals. He accepted point (i) of the proposals. On point (ii) he agreed to the extension of the Polish frontier to the Oder, but regarded as unjustified a further extension to the western Neisse. With regard to the future Government of Poland he proposed that M. Molotov, Mr. Harriman and Sir A. Clark Kerr should be authorised on behalf of the three Governments to invite to Moscow MM. Bierut and Morawski, Archbishop Sapieha, MM. Witos, Mikolajczyk and Grabski to bring about the formation of a Polish Government of National Unity along the following lines:

- (i) There should be formed a Presidential Committee of three, consisting possibly of M. Bierut, M. Grabski and Archbishop Sapieha, to represent the Presidential Office of the Polish Republic.
- (ii) This Committee would form a Government of representative leaders from the present Provisional Government in Warsaw, from other democratic elements inside Poland, and from Polish democratic leaders abroad.
- (iii) The interim Government thus formed would pledge itself to hold, as soon as conditions allowed, free elections to a Constituent Assembly for the establishment of a new Polish Constitution under which a permanent Government would be elected.
- (iv) When the Government of National Unity had been formed, the three Governments would proceed to accord it recognition as the Provisional Government of Poland.

M. Molotov asked whether we should cease to recognise the London Government after the formation of the Government of National Unity. The Prime Minister explained that, if and when a stage was reached at which we could recognise the Government of National Unity, we should withdraw recognition from the London Government and accredit an Ambassador to the new Government. M. Molotov then asked whether the money and resources in possession of the London Government would pass to the new Government. The Prime Minister said that this would be so in principle, but that he did not know what technical and legal points would be involved. President Roosevelt said that all property of the Polish Government outside Poland would pass automatically to the new Government.

After a short adjournment the Prime Minister said that the British delegation had given the Soviet delegation an alternative document, but that as they had begun to discuss the President's document, he would not refer to the British draft until agreement had been reached in principle. He might then suggest some verbal amendments to the President's draft.

The British draft ran as follows:

(i) It was agreed that the Curzon line should be the eastern frontier of Poland with adjustments in some regions of 5 to 8 km. in favour of Poland.

(ii) It was decided that the territory of Poland in the west should include the Free City of Danzig, the regions of East Prussia south and west of Königsberg, the administrative district of Oppeln in Silesia and the lands desired by Poland to the east of the line of the Oder. It was understood that the Germans in the said regions should be repatriated to Germany and that all Poles in Germany should at their wish be repatriated to Poland.

(iii) Having regard to the recent liberation of western Poland by the Soviet armies¹ it was deemed desirable to facilitate the establishment of a fully representative Provisional Polish Government based upon all the democratic and anti-Fascist forces in Poland, and including democratic leaders from Poles abroad. This Government should be so constituted as to command recognition by the three Allied Governments.

(iv) It was agreed that the establishment of such a Provisional Government was the primary responsibility of the Polish people, and that, pending the possibility of free elections, representative Polish leaders should consult together on the composition of this Provisional Government. M. Molotov, Mr. Harriman and Sir A. Clark Kerr were entrusted with the task of approaching such leaders and submitting their proposals to the consideration of the three Allied Governments.

¹ At the end of January 1945 the whole of Poland had been liberated. The Russian armies had crossed the German frontier into Silesia, and had cleared East Prussia except for Königsberg and Danzig.

(v) It was deemed desirable that the Provisional Polish Government, thus established, should as soon as possible hold free and unfettered elections on the basis of universal suffrage and secret ballot, in which all democratic parties should have the right to participate and to promote candidates, in order to ensure the establishment of a Government truly representative of the will of the Polish people.'

During the resumed discussion M. Molotov said that the Soviet proposals were based on certain definite foundations. The Soviet Government thought the present Provisional Government should be extended to form the new Government and that other members should join it. This Provisional Government existed. It was now in Warsaw. It enjoyed great authority and prestige and had been enthusiastically acclaimed by the majority of the Polish people. If proposals were now put forward ignoring these facts, the Poles might not agree to them. If, however, we started from the basis that the Provisional Government should be enlarged, we should probably succeed. Unlike the members of the Provisional Government, MM. Mikolajczyk, Grabski, Witos and Romer had taken no direct part in the decisive events now occurring in Poland.

M. Molotov had doubts about Mr. Roosevelt's proposal for a Presidential Committee, since its composition would give us a second problem. There was a National Council which could be enlarged; the Conference might consider how this enlargement could be carried out. M. Molotov thought that for the talks in Moscow with Mr. Harriman, Sir A. Clark Kerr, and himself the proposals in President Roosevelt's letter would be more acceptable than those in his later draft. The Provisional Government might refuse to deal, for example, with M. Mikolajczyk. M. Molotov suggested that three representatives should come from the Provisional Government and that we should invite two out of five names in the President's letter.

The Prime Minister again spoke of the importance of the Polish question. Unless an agreement were reached, the Conference would appear to public opinion to have failed, and the consequences of disagreement would be lamentable. On the other hand we and the Russians took different views about some of the basic facts in Poland. According to British information the great majority of the Polish people did not support the Lublin (now Warsaw) Government. If the Conference were to set aside the existing London Government and lend all its weight to the Lublin Government, there would be a world outcry. The Poles outside Poland would make an almost unanimous protest. We had under our command a Polish army of 150,000 men from among those who had been able to come together from outside Poland. They had fought, and were fighting bravely.

They would not be at all reconciled to the Lublin Government, and would reckon the transfer of British recognition from the London Government as an act of betrayal.

The Prime Minister thought that the actions of the London Government had been foolish, but the formal act of withdrawing recognition from them would cause the gravest criticism. It would be said—and with truth—that we had given way completely on the eastern frontier; that we had broken with the legitimate Government of Poland which we had recognised during five years of war, and that we did not know what was actually happening in Poland. The British Government would be charged in Parliament with having forsaken altogether the cause of Poland, and the debates which would follow would be most painful and embarrassing to the unity of the Allies.

Mr. Churchill did not think that M. Molotov's proposals went far enough. If we gave up the Polish Government in London, a new start should be made from both sides on more or less equal terms. We could not transfer recognition until we were sure that the new Government truly represented the Polish nation. We did not indeed fully know the facts, and all our differences would be removed if a free and unfettered general election were held in Poland by ballot and with universal suffrage and free candidatures. What we were anxious about was the interval before the election.

The President also said that American opinion wanted an early election and that the problem was how the country should be governed before this election. Stalin maintained that the British and American information differed from that of the Russians. He assured the Conference that the Provisional Government really was popular, and, in particular, that MM. Bierut and Morawski and General Zymierski had made a deep impression on the Polish people because they had not left the country. The London Government might contain more clever people but they were not liked in Poland because they had not been seen there during the German occupation.

The liberation of Poland by the Russians had made a great change. The old resentment of the Poles against the Russians had disappeared and had been replaced by goodwill and even enthusiasm for them. The population had been delighted to see the Germans go, and was astonished that the London Government did not take part in this great festival of the Polish nation. They saw the members of the Provisional Government, and asked where were the London Poles. Stalin asked therefore what was to be done. The various Governments had different information and drew different conclusions from it. The first thing, perhaps, was to hear what the Poles of different sections of opinion had to say. It was a disadvantage that the Polish Government had not been elected, but until elections could be held,

we had to deal with this Government as we dealt, for example, with General de Gaulle's Government in France which also had not been elected. We could not reasonably demand more from Poland than from France. Up to the present indeed the French Government had not carried out any reforms which had created enthusiasm in France, whereas great enthusiasm had been aroused in Poland by the land reforms of the Polish Government.

Stalin did not regard the situation as tragically as the Prime Minister; he thought that an agreement could be reached if we concentrated on essentials and did not attach too much importance to secondary matters. He agreed with M. Molotov in thinking that we should deal with the reconstruction of the present Provisional Government rather than create a new Government. We could discuss with them the proposal for a Presidential Committee. They might agree to it, but their *amour propre* and confidence had now increased.

The Prime Minister asked how soon it would be possible to hold elections in Poland. Stalin thought that they could be held within a month unless there were some catastrophe on the front. The Prime Minister said that a free election would settle the matter. If the military situation allowed an election to be held even within two months, the situation, from the British point of view, would be entirely different. The President also thought the matter worth pursuing, and suggested that the Foreign Secretaries should discuss it with Sir A. Clark Kerr and Mr. Harriman.

- (a) The Foreign Secretaries, and the two Ambassadors, discussed the Polish question with M. Molotov, M. Vyshinsky and M. Gusev on the morning of February 9. Mr. Stettinius, after repeating that the question of Poland was of the greatest importance from the point of view of American opinion, read a statement of policy. He said that he now thought it best to drop the proposal for a Presidential Committee, since otherwise the views of the three Delegations were not far apart. M. Molotov had spoken of the reorganisation of the Polish Government. The British formula had suggested the establishment of a fully representative Provisional Polish Government, and the Americans had proposed a 'Government of National Unity'. All three agreed that this Government should be composed of members of the present Polish Provisional Government and, in addition, representatives of other democratic elements inside Poland and some democratic leaders from abroad.

Mr. Stettinius therefore suggested the following formula:

'That the present Polish Provisional Government be reorganised into a fully representative Government based on all democratic

(a) WP(45)157; N1739/6/55.

forces in Poland and including democratic leaders from abroad, to be termed "The Provisional Government of National Unity"; M. Molotov, Mr. Harriman and Sir A. Clark Kerr to be authorised to consult in the first instance in Moscow with members of the present Provisional Government and other democratic leaders from within Poland and from abroad with a view to the reorganisation of the present Government along the above lines. This "Government of National Unity" would be pledged to the holding of free and unfettered elections as soon as possible on the basis of universal suffrage and secret ballot in which all democratic parties would have the right to participate and to put forward candidates.

When a Polish Government of National Unity is satisfactorily established, the three Governments will then proceed to accord it recognition. The Ambassadors of the three Powers in Warsaw following such recognition would be charged with the responsibility of observing and reporting to their respective Governments on the carrying out of the pledge in regard to free and unfettered elections.'

While Mr. Stettinius's text was being translated into Russian, Mr. Eden said that he must state frankly his own difficulties. Many people thought that the Poles had been harshly treated by our readiness to acquiesce in the Curzon line as a frontier. Apart from the merits of the case, Mr. Eden himself had feared that it might become a matter of difficulty between the Soviet Government and ourselves. Mr. Eden then spoke of the Lublin Government. We might be wrong but hardly anyone in Great Britain believed this Government to be representative of Poland. Mr. Eden thought that our view of it was also widely held in the rest of Europe and in the United States. For this reason we had avoided any mention in our proposals of 'additions' to the Lublin Government, and had emphasised that a new start was necessary. Furthermore, if, as the result of an agreement, we had to give up recognising the London Government, we could do so more easily by transferring our recognition to a new Government rather than to the Lublin Government.

We had about 150,000 Poles fighting with us; this number would increase as more Poles were able to join us. We wanted to get their approval of our settlement, and, once again, our task would be easier if we made a fresh start. Mr. Eden was also not convinced that the Lublin Government would be opposed to M. Mikolajczyk; on the other hand he thought that M. Mikolajczyk's presence in a Polish Government would do more than anything else to add to its authority and to convince the British people of its representative character.

M. Molotov then repeated the Russian thesis that the present situation would not last, and that the principal requirement was a general election in Poland. The election results would give us a basis for the further Government of Poland and provide the answer to criticisms that too many concessions had been made. On the other

hand fighting was still going on in Poland, and the country was at present the rear area of the Soviet army. During the interim period, therefore, before the elections the Soviet Government suggested a reorganisation of the present Polish Government by the addition of Poles from within and without. M. Molotov said that he might be wrong in thinking that the Poles would not accept M. Mikolajczyk, but the matter was one for them to decide. The Commission of Ambassadors referred to in the American proposals should undertake to talk to the Poles.

Mr. Stettinius considered M. Molotov's remarks to be interesting and helpful. Mr. Eden agreed that the question of holding an election was of importance; he pointed out, however, that British opinion would not regard elections managed by the Lublin Government as free. For this reason the elections should be postponed until a new Government had been formed.

After the translation of the American document M. Molotov said that we ought not to insist on matters which could not be settled without consulting the Poles. He suggested that we should say something on the lines that a new Government was being created on the basis of the present Government by adding democratic forces from within Poland and from abroad. M. Molotov also wanted to omit the sentence referring to the duty of the Ambassadors to report on the elections; he thought that the Poles might regard the sentence as offensive.

Mr. Eden then read out a revised version of the American formula as follows:

"The three Governments consider that a new situation has been created by the complete liberation of Poland by the Red Army. This calls for the establishment of a fully representative Provisional Polish Government which can now be more broadly based than was possible before the recent liberation of western Poland. This Government should comprise members of the present Provisional Government at Warsaw and other democratic leaders from within Poland and from Poles abroad. The new Government, thus established, should be termed "the Provisional Government of National Unity." M. Molotov, Mr. Harriman, Sir A. Clark Kerr, etc.' (as in Mr. Stettinius's formula).

Mr. Stettinius approved of Mr. Eden's formula, but M. Molotov said that they could not leave out all mention that the new Government should be formed on the basis of the present Government; otherwise they would get an unstable situation in the rear of the Soviet Army. M. Molotov refused Mr. Eden's formula and insisted on the Russian proposal to reorganise the Government on the basis of the present Warsaw Government. The three Foreign Secretaries therefore had to report that they had been unable to reach agreement.

At the fifth plenary meeting on February 9 M. Molotov proposed certain amendments to Mr. Stettinius's document. He proposed (i) that the first sentence should read: 'That the present Provisional Government of Poland should be reorganised on a wider democratic basis with the inclusion of democratic leaders from Poland itself and also from those living abroad. This Government would be called the "National Provisional Government of Poland"'; (ii) that the words following 'secret ballot' should be deleted, and replaced by a new sentence: 'In these elections all non-Fascist and anti-Fascist democratic parties should have the right to take part and put forward candidates.' (iii) In place of the last paragraph there should be one sentence only: 'When a Polish Government of National Unity has been formed on the lines laid down above, the three Powers will proceed to recognise it.' M. Molotov repeated his view that a reference to the responsibility of the three Ambassadors for observing and reporting on the elections would hurt the *amour propre* of the Poles. The Prime Minister welcomed so considerable an advance towards an agreement. He added that it might be necessary to prolong the Conference for another twenty-four hours. He said that 'a great prize was in view, and decisions taken must be unhurried. These might well be among the most important days in the lives of those present.'

The Conference then turned for a short time to other questions. When the discussion on Poland was resumed President Roosevelt said that the differences with the Russians seemed now to be largely a matter of words. M. Molotov, for example, had suggested that 'the present Polish Government' should be organised on a wider basis. It was, however, difficult for countries which recognised not the Lublin but the London Government to use these words.¹ M. Molotov had also proposed to cut out the sentence about the duty of the Ambassadors to report on the elections. President Roosevelt asked on behalf of some six million Poles in the United States for some assurance that the elections really would be honest and free. He thought that the Foreign Secretaries could produce an agreed text, and that the matter should be referred back to them.

The Prime Minister supported this suggestion. He also mentioned two points. He thought that, as Stalin had said on the previous day, the liberation of Poland was an important new fact, and that this fact should be stated to the whole world. For this reason he suggested that the statement should begin by calling attention to it. The Prime Minister spoke of the last sentence of the American draft. He said that he wished to make an appeal to Stalin. The British Government knew little of what was actually happening in Poland, but they did

¹ Later in the discussion the President suggested, and Stalin said that he would accept, the term 'the Polish Government now functioning in Poland'.

know of the bitter feelings among the Poles and the very fierce language used by M. Morawski. The Lublin Government had openly declared their intention to try as traitors all members of the Polish Home Army and Underground movement. This announcement had caused the Prime Minister great anxiety and distress.

The Prime Minister wished Stalin 'with his patience and kindness' to consider the British position. We knew what was happening in Poland only from the brave men whom we dropped by parachute and from members of the Underground movement whom we brought out of Poland. Could we and the United States, without hampering the Red Army, receive facilities enabling us to see how these Polish quarrels were being settled? For this reason the last sentence of the American draft was of such importance. Russian, British and American observers were promised facilities to report on the elections in Yugoslavia, and we should welcome observers in Greece. A similar question would arise in Italy.

The Prime Minister asked, for example, whether M. Mikolajczyk would be able to go back to Poland and organise his party for the election. Stalin said that the matter would be considered by the Ambassadors and M. Molotov and the Poles in accordance with the decisions reached. The Prime Minister replied that he must be in a position to tell the House of Commons that the elections would be free and there would be effective guarantees of this freedom. Stalin pointed out that M. Mikolajczyk was a representative of the Peasant Party; this party was non-Fascist and would be able to take part in the elections. The Prime Minister said that there would be still more certainty if the Peasant Party were already represented in the Polish Government. Stalin agreed that the Government should include a representative of the party.

The Prime Minister continued that he wanted to carry the eastern frontier settlement through Parliament, and that he thought it possible to do so if Parliament were satisfied that the Poles had been able to decide for themselves what they wanted. The Prime Minister did not much like the division between 'Fascists' and 'non-Fascists', since 'anybody could call anybody else anything'. He would prefer the words 'democratic forces'. Stalin pointed to the use of the word 'Fascism' in one of the clauses of the proposed declaration on liberated Europe.¹ President Roosevelt said that the question of free elections was important, since Poland was one of the first examples of a country starting life again in liberated Europe. He read to Stalin the later words in the clause which he had quoted: 'and to create democratic institutions of their own choice'. The President also quoted the statement in the next paragraph of the Declaration to the effect that the

¹ See Volume V, Chapter LXXV, section (i).

three Governments would assist the people of a liberated State 'to form interim governmental authorities broadly representative of all democratic elements in the population and pledged to the earliest possible establishment through free elections of governments responsive to the will of the people, and to facilitate where necessary the holding of such elections'.

Stalin said that he accepted this clause. M. Molotov, however, repeated his argument that the Poles would feel that they were not trusted if the last sentence of the American draft were included without consulting them.

During these days of discussion the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden had kept in touch with the War Cabinet. They had telegraphed to London the Russian and American proposals and Mr. Eden's draft. They had also said that, in their view, we should be wise to recognise the Lublin Government at once if we could secure the incorporation into it of eight or ten of the Poles with whom we were associated, and of a number of Poles in Poland.

The War Cabinet accepted this view. They were, however, uneasy, (a) and thought that public opinion was increasingly critical of the territorial demands put forward by the Lublin Government. They did not wish to bind themselves more than was necessary before the Peace Conference. The War Cabinet decided to suggest to the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden that the phrase referring to this extension¹ should read 'and such other lands to the east of the line of the Oder as at the Peace Conference it shall be considered desirable to transfer to Poland'. This change of words would allow the decision to remain with the United Nations and not with the Lublin Poles.

The War Cabinet were in full agreement about the necessity for a sovereign and independent Polish Government based ultimately on free elections. They decided to call the Prime Minister's attention to the possibility that between the formation of the Provisional Government now in view and the elections, the Government might be reconstituted in such a way as to eliminate wholly or in part the non-Communist elements with whom we had been associated and in whose interest we required a free election. We should therefore try to secure that the balance of the new Government should be maintained until after the election. A telegram to this effect was sent to the Prime Minister on February 9. (b)

The Foreign Secretaries met again at 10 p.m. on February 9. (c) Mr. Eden again put forward the British draft, with some minor changes. He said that the changes had been made before he had

¹ i.e. the words 'and the lands desired by Poland to the east of the line of the Oder'.

(a) WM(45)16, C.A.; N1456/6/55.

(b) Tel. Fleece 324 (Churchill Papers/356; N1465/6/55). (c) WP(45)157; N1740/6/55.

received a telegram from the War Cabinet, but the War Cabinet were gravely concerned at the earlier text transmitted to them. Unless a text were accepted on the lines of the British draft, there would be no hope of agreement and no use in continuing the discussions.

The meeting agreed to consider the British text. The text now ran as follows:

'A new situation has been created by the complete liberation of Poland by the Red Army. This calls for the establishment of a fully representative provisional Polish Government which can be more broadly based than was possible before the recent liberation of Western Poland. This Government should be based upon the Provisional Government now functioning in Poland and upon other democratic Polish leaders from within Poland and from abroad. This new Government will be called the Polish Provisional Government of National Unity.

M. Molotov, Mr. Harriman and Sir A. Clark Kerr should be authorised to consult in the first instance in Moscow with members of the present Provisional Government and with other democratic leaders from within Poland and from abroad with a view to the reorganisation of the present Government along the above lines. This "Provisional Government of National Unity" would be pledged to the holding of free and unfettered elections as soon as practicable on the basis of universal suffrage and secret ballot. In these elections all democratic parties would have the right to take part and to put forward candidates.

When a Polish Provisional Government of National Unity has been formed, which the three Governments can regard as fully representative of the Polish people, the three Governments will accord it recognition. The Ambassadors of the three Powers in Warsaw, following such recognition, would be charged with the responsibility of observing and reporting to their respective Governments on the carrying out of the pledge in regard to free and unfettered elections.'

The meeting considered whether it was desirable to use the phrase 'when a Polish Provisional Government of National Unity has been satisfactorily formed'. M. Molotov felt that the word 'satisfactorily' would be offensive to the Poles. He also objected to the phrase 'fully representative Government' as inserting a new idea which would give rise to more discussion. He did not like the phrase in the next sentence about the basis of the new Government. He suggested a phrase to the effect that the Government 'now acting in Poland' should be reorganised on a broader basis. When this Government had been reorganised, the three Powers could accord it recognition.

Mr. Eden said that he was not asking the Soviet Government to recognise a reorganised London Government, but the Soviet Government were asking the British and Americans to recognise a

reorganised Lublin Government. What we wanted was to recognise something new.

After further discussion this part of the British text was agreed. Then followed a discussion of the Soviet proposal to include the words 'anti-fascist' parties. It was finally agreed that the words 'democratic and anti-Nazi parties' should be substituted for 'anti-fascist parties'.

M. Molotov's next objection was to the phrase that recognition would be accorded after the new Government had been 'satisfactorily formed'. He thought that the word 'satisfactorily' would be offensive to the Poles. It was agreed to use the phrase 'properly formed in conformity with the above'. Finally M. Molotov objected to the provision that the three Ambassadors should observe and report on the elections. Mr. Stettinius thought that a provision of this kind would be of very great help in getting the support of public opinion in the United States, and that the President would insist on it. Mr. Eden added that it was only a statement of fact, since the Ambassadors would obviously report to their Governments.

The meeting was unable to reach agreement on this point, and left it for consideration until the following day. When the discussion (a) was resumed at a meeting of the Foreign Secretaries on the morning of February 10, Mr. Stettinius said that he was prepared to withdraw his insistence upon the final sentence on the understanding that President Roosevelt would be free to make any statement to the American people regarding the receipt of information from the United States Ambassador at Warsaw.

Mr. Eden said that he was not prepared to omit the sentence. M. Molotov then suggested that, instead of the sentence in the last paragraph that the three Governments would accord recognition to the Polish Government when it had been properly formed in accordance with the conditions set, the text should run: 'The (British and American) Governments would establish with the new Polish Provisional Government diplomatic relations as had been done by the Soviet Government.' Mr. Stettinius pointed out—as Mr. Eden had done at the previous meeting of Foreign Secretaries—that the British and Americans would then be put in the position of recognising a Government which the Soviet Government had already recognised. What we wanted was a new Government. It was agreed therefore that further consideration of this amendment would be necessary.

At the sixth plenary meeting, in the afternoon of February 10,¹ the Prime Minister explained the disadvantages from the British

¹ No American representatives were present at this meeting. Although it was called a plenary meeting, it was only a conversation between the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden and Stalin and M. Molotov.

(a) WP(45)157; N1741/6/55.

point of view in having no representatives in Poland who could keep us informed. He would be asked in Parliament about the Lublin Government and the Polish elections; it was therefore essential for him to say that he knew what was going on. Stalin said that after the recognition of the new Government we could send an Ambassador to Warsaw. The Prime Minister asked whether the Ambassador would have freedom of movement within the country. Stalin promised to give the necessary instructions as far as the Soviet army was concerned; he said, however, that we should have to make our own arrangements with the Polish Government. The Prime Minister and Stalin then agreed to add to the statement on Poland the following words: 'As a consequence of the above, recognition would entail an exchange of Ambassadors by whose reports the respective Governments would be informed about the situation in Poland.'

The seventh plenary meeting was held later in the afternoon of February 10. Mr. Eden reported agreement among the three Foreign Secretaries on the draft statement about Poland as far as the (amended) first sentence of the third paragraph.¹ M. Molotov now proposed, and the Conference accepted, a new third paragraph:

'When a Polish Provisional Government of National Unity has been properly formed in conformity with the above, the Government of the U.S.S.R., which now maintains diplomatic relations with the present Provisional Government of Poland, and the Government of the United Kingdom and the Government of the United States of America will establish diplomatic relations with the new Polish Provisional Government of National Unity, and will exchange Ambassadors by whose reports the respective Governments will be kept informed about the situation in Poland.'

This sentence was thus a compromise between the British and Soviet views about the reporting on the fulfilment of the pledge with regard to 'free and unfettered elections'. The Prime Minister, while accepting the compromise on this important point, raised the question of the frontiers. He said that public opinion would ask what agreement had been reached about them. The Conference agreed in principle about the western frontier; the only question was where exactly the line should be drawn, and how much should be said about it. We were very doubtful about the Poles going beyond the Oder and about making a reference at this stage to such a possibility. The Prime Minister mentioned the telegram² which he had received from the War Cabinet strongly deprecating a reference to a frontier as far west as the western Neisse owing to the difficulty of transferring the population.

¹ This sentence now ran: 'When a Polish Provisional Government of National Unity has been properly formed in conformity with the above, the three Governments will accord it recognition.'

² See above. pp. 267-8.

President Roosevelt said that he would prefer to hear the views of the new Government, and that no reference should be made at present to the western frontier. Stalin said that the eastern frontier should certainly be mentioned. The Prime Minister agreed with Stalin. He thought that there would be much criticism but he would have to state the British position frankly. As regards the western frontier he agreed that we should first ascertain the wishes of the new Government, and that the frontier itself should be determined as part of the peace settlement. President Roosevelt said that it would be easier for him if neither frontier were mentioned, since he had no right to agree on such matters which, in the United States, were the concern of the Senate.

The Conference finally agreed to add to the statement on Poland:

‘The three Heads of Governments consider that the eastern frontier of Poland should follow the Curzon line with digressions from it in some regions of 5 to 8 km. in favour of Poland. They recognise that Poland must receive substantial accessions of territory in the north and west. They feel that the opinion of the new Polish Provisional Government of National Unity should be sought in due course on the extent of these accessions, and that the final delimitation of the western frontier of Poland should thereafter await the Peace Conference.’¹

The Prime Minister telegraphed on February 10 to Mr. Attlee— (a) for the War Cabinet—a general comment on the results of the Conference.² He said that after a prolonged struggle Mr. Eden had agreed with the Americans and Russians on a ‘very good draft’ concerning the Polish question. The only remaining point to be settled was the arrangement for supervising the voting and for informing ourselves properly about what was happening in Poland. ‘All the reality in this business depends on this point.’

On February 12 the War Cabinet had before them the draft text (b) of the announcement to be made at the end of the Conference. Mr. Attlee said that the results achieved by the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden, in the face of great difficulties, were highly satisfactory. Mr. Attlee mentioned the various subjects upon which agreement had

¹ The final communiqué of the Conference was agreed at the eighth plenary meeting on February 11. The communiqué began with a preamble: ‘We came to the Crimea Conference resolved to settle our differences about Poland. We discussed fully all aspects of the question. We reaffirm our common desire to see established a strong, free, independent and democratic Poland. As a result of our discussions we have agreed on the conditions in which a new Polish Provisional Government of National Unity may be formed in such a manner as to command recognition by the three major Powers.’ Then followed the text of the agreement. The agreement was also included as a Declaration on Poland in the Protocol of the Conference.

² For the Prime Minister’s telegram of February 10, the War Cabinet discussion on February 12 and the Prime Minister’s statement to the War Cabinet on his return to London, see also Volume V, Chapter LXV.

(a) Jason 321, Churchill Papers/51. (b) WM(45)18.3, C.A.

been reached. These subjects included the very difficult question of Poland; the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden had succeeded in keeping until the Peace Conference the settlement of the western frontier of Poland. At Mr. Attlee's suggestion the War Cabinet agreed to send the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden a telegram of congratulations on the skill and success with which they had conducted the discussions, and the results which they had obtained.

- (a) On February 19 the Prime Minister gave the War Cabinet his impressions of the Conference. After Mr. Attlee had repeated the hearty congratulations of the Cabinet on the results achieved, the Prime Minister said that he was quite sure that Stalin meant well to the world and to Poland. The Prime Minister did not think that the Russians would resent the arrangements made for free and fair Polish elections. He had found an extraordinary change in the situation on his arrival in the Crimea. In three weeks the Russian armies had advanced from the Vistula to the Oder, and had liberated almost the whole of Poland. They had been welcomed in many parts of the country. The Prime Minister had advocated throughout the discussions at the Conference the policy approved by the War Cabinet for a free and independent Poland with a Government more broadly composed than had been the case, and with a recognition of the principle of free and fair elections. The arrangements now made were on the best practicable lines and were in the interest of Poland. Stalin had said that Russia had committed many sins (this term was used by the translator, but Stalin's actual word might have been 'crimes') and that she had joined in the partitions and cruel oppression of Poland. The Soviet Government did not intend to repeat this policy. The Prime Minister had no doubt of the sincerity of Stalin's declaration. He felt strongly that the Russians were anxious to work harmoniously with the two English-speaking democracies. Relations at the Conference had been very easy and the difference of language with the Russians had not impaired the closeness of contact or understanding. Stalin was a man of great power in whom the Prime Minister had every confidence. He did not expect him to start on any adventures, though he realised that much depended on Stalin's life.

In this general survey the Prime Minister also mentioned the satisfactory attitude of the Russians about Greece¹ and their evident wish to meet President Roosevelt on points to which they thought that he (the President) attached real importance. The War Cabinet did not discuss any of the matters covered by the Prime Minister in his survey; they gave general approval to his statement.

¹ See below, p. 437.

(a) WM(45)22.1, C.A.

(vi)

The attitude of the Polish Government to the Yalta agreement: the Prime Minister's interview with General Anders: instructions to Sir A. Clark Kerr with regard to the Moscow Commission (February 12-21, 1945).

Mr. Law and Sir O. Sargent showed Count Raczynski the text of (a) the Yalta communiqué on Poland in the evening of February 12. Count Raczynski pointed out that the communiqué did not mention the number of Poles from inside Poland and from London who were to be included in the new Government. M. Mikolajczyk had discussed the matter at Moscow on the basis of a 'fifty-fifty' representation. Sir O. Sargent said that the conditions were now much less favourable to the London Government; M. Mikolajczyk was no longer Prime Minister and the Russians had recognised the Lublin Committee as a Government.

Count Raczynski also referred to the passage in the communiqué about the right of democratic and anti-Nazi parties to take part in the elections and to put forward conditions. The Russian idea of a democratic and anti-Nazi party was in the highest degree selective, and, unless the position were carefully watched, any party not a puppet of the Russians would be labelled undemocratic and pro-Nazi.

Mr. Law and Sir O. Sargent said that the only alternative to the agreement now made was that the London Government should remain in permanent exile, while the Lublin Government established itself more and more strongly in Poland. The Russians were now pledged once again to the independence of Poland, and—an even more important consideration—we and the Americans were associated with the pledge and the Russians had formally recognised our interest in the political future of Poland and our responsibility for securing Polish independence. Our Ambassadors would report on the implementation of the agreement.

Count Raczynski said that there was no more reason to suppose that our Ambassadors in Warsaw would have more opportunities than our Ambassador at Moscow of reporting on the situation. M. Mikolajczyk would soon find his position impossible as a member of the new Government if he were known to be on friendly terms with the British and American Ambassadors. Moreover, there was no guarantee that the members admitted into the new Government would be kept in it. Count Raczynski spoke of the difficult position in which the Polish armed forces would be put. He also said that, if there were to be any chance of making the agreement effective, it was essential for us to stand firm on all points of principle even though they might seem rather to be matters of detail. If we began to give

(a) N1648/6/55.

way on the details of the implementation of the agreement, the Russians would undermine it to such an extent that it would soon become meaningless.

- (a) On February 13 the Polish Government in London published a declaration stating that the Yalta decisions had been taken without consultation with the legal Government of Poland and that the Polish nation was not bound by them. The declaration described the frontier proposals as a 'fifth partition of Poland, this time carried out by her Allies', while the proposals for the formation of a re-organised Provisional Government legalised Soviet interference in Polish internal affairs.
- (b) The Polish Government also addressed a note of protest to the British Government recalling the various British commitments towards Poland, and maintaining that the Yalta decisions were
- (c) incompatible with them. On the other hand the Polish Government issued a relatively helpful appeal to the Polish forces to maintain discipline. General Anders addressed a similar appeal in an Order
- (d) of the Day to his own troops. On February 21 at the suggestion of the Foreign Office the Prime Minister received General Anders. The General described the Yalta agreement as 'the end of Poland'. He did not know what to say to his own troops. Their feeling was very strong; they had given their oath to the Polish Government and the Constitution, and could not lightly transfer it to any other body.

General Anders was convinced that Stalin's intentions were dishonourable and that the new Government would merely be the Lublin Government thinly disguised; he said that practically no Poles in the army would be able to return to Poland. The Prime Minister explained the procedure to be followed under the Yalta agreement, and emphasised that we should not recognise the new Government unless we were satisfied with its composition. Our own and the American Ambassadors would let us know what was happening in Poland, and we should have a chance of assuring ourselves that the elections would be fairly carried out.

These arguments had no effect on General Anders. He said that it would have been far better from the point of view of Poland if we had left matters alone. The Prime Minister said that he did not see why most of the Polish troops should not go back to Poland. If, however, they could not do so, he would try to secure for them British citizenship and conditions similar to those of soldiers serving in the British army, and also to find them, if it were possible and

- (e) necessary, a refuge in the British Empire. He also told General Anders that there would soon be an obvious place for his troops in the British

(a) N1969/6/55. (b) N1776/6/55. (c) N1758/1758/38. (d) N1884/6/55.

(e) WM(45)23. 2, C.A.

zone of occupation in Germany. General Anders welcomed this suggestion.

General Anders raised the question of relief for the families of Polish soldiers. Hitherto the Polish Government were carrying out this relief, but if the Embassy staff were to be replaced by representatives of what he would regard as the Lublin Government, the relief work would be affected. The Prime Minister said that he would consider the question. He asked General Anders to postpone his return to Italy for a week, and agreed to see him again on February 28.¹

Meanwhile on February 20 Mr. Eden and Sir A. Cadogan had had a (a) conversation with MM. Mikolajczyk and Romer. Mr. Eden was surprised at their critical attitude towards the Yalta arrangements and at their extreme suspicions of the Soviet intentions. M. Mikolajczyk said that doubtless the Soviet Government would bring the whole of the Lublin Government into the Moscow consultations. Mr. Eden said that the Commission would decide upon the persons to be consulted, and that our consent would be necessary. We had already put forward the names of MM. Mikolajczyk and Romer and of M. Grabski.

M. Mikolajczyk was willing to go to Moscow, but argued that the result would be that we should recognise the Lublin Government. Mr. Eden pointed out that the term 'new Government' appeared twice in the communiqué. M. Mikolajczyk maintained that in fact this 'new Government' would be the Lublin Government with a few outside individuals added to it.

The War Cabinet had a general discussion about the Polish (b) position on February 21. The Prime Minister said that if the terms of our agreement with Stalin were carried out in good faith, all would be well. Otherwise our engagement would not hold. We should not transfer our recognition from the London Government, as the legitimate Government of Poland, until a new Government had been set up, on the agreed basis, to tide over the period before a free general election. Once a free election had been held, our responsibilities to Poland were discharged. There was no question of failing to honour our engagements.

The Prime Minister felt that the Russians also would honour the declaration; the immediate test of their sincerity would be the return

¹ The Prime Minister did not see General Anders on February 28, since, in spite of an understanding to the contrary with the British authorities, he had meanwhile been appointed Acting Polish Commander-in-Chief.

(a) N1883/6/55. (b) WM(45)23.2, C.A.; N2389/6/55.

of M. Mikolajczyk to Poland. If the Lublin Government opposed his return, we should have to contest the matter. The Prime Minister gave an account of his conversation earlier in the day with General Anders. He hoped that the War Cabinet would agree with his offer to the Polish forces if they could not return to Poland. The Prime Minister quoted the precedent of the King's Own German Legion which had settled at Cape Colony.¹

The War Cabinet considered that any formal undertaking to implement the offer would have to be worded with care. There was some pressure for the naturalisation of all aliens who had served in the British forces. The Dominions were also concerned, since there was a convention that they should be consulted about changes in the basis of British citizenship. The War Cabinet thought that this consultation should take place at once, and that we should avoid any public reference to an offer. Otherwise we might give the impression that we expected the Yalta agreement to break down, and the Lublin Government might say that, since we were looking after those Poles who were opposed to them, they would not trouble about them. We should also have to consider the financial aspect of the question.

- (a) On February 18 the Foreign Office had sent instructions to Sir A. Clark Kerr with regard to the work of the Moscow Commission. These instructions began by stating that the 'crucial points' in the Yalta settlement, for the British and United States Governments, were that the new Polish Government should contain adequate representation of the 'non-Lublin Poles'; that the latter should be able to exercise real influence over the decisions—and the execution of decisions—taken by the new Government; that the new Government should inspire the maximum degree of confidence in non-Lublin Poles inside and outside Poland, and on world opinion; and that it should be assured of permanency pending the holding of elections and that the position in Poland should not be prejudicial to the non-Lublin Poles while the Government was being established.

We expected M. Molotov to work for the retention of real power in the hands of the Lublin Poles. The Lublin Government depended on the backing of the Soviet army and the N.K.V.D. We and the Americans therefore would have to make the strongest possible stand from the outset, not only to ensure that the new Government was 'properly formed', but that it was able to function properly and freely. M. Molotov would no doubt act as 'Counsel for Lublin'. Sir A. Clark Kerr (and, we hoped, Mr. Harriman) should therefore act as 'Counsel for the "non-Lublin" Poles'.

¹ The reference would seem to be to the settlement in South Africa in 1857 of the German Legion raised during the Crimean War.

(a) N1745/6/55.

The first objective must be to secure agreement on the method of work of the Commission. The co-operation of representative Poles would not be gained unless we could satisfy them that they were wrong in their natural assumption that 'the dice were heavily loaded against them'. The Commission should not themselves select the Poles to form the new Government, but should preside, more or less as a natural 'chairman', over discussions among representative Poles. Otherwise M. Molotov would try to exclude any names not satisfactory to Lublin.

We proposed therefore that the Commission should at once invite to Moscow representatives of the Lublin Poles and an unspecified number of others from inside and outside Poland for discussion among themselves, under the auspices of the Commission, on the formation of a new Government, the allocation of key posts, etc. We should hope to be able to persuade MM. Mikolajczyk, Romer and Grabski to attend. We also wished M. Witos, Archbishop Sapieha, and others to come from Poland. The Soviet authorities should be asked to instruct the Lublin Government to produce the people for whom we asked.

Sir A. Clark Kerr was instructed that, if possible, an immediate stop should be put to measures against 'anti-Lublin' Poles, and leaders and members of the Underground movement and Army. It would clearly be difficult to stop those measures but we (and, we hoped, the United States Government) should ask the Soviet Government at once to ensure that all legal proceedings and administrative measures against individuals (except for crimes against the law or the Soviet army) should be suspended until the formation of the new Polish Government.¹

It was desirable to put the British proposals to M. Molotov before he had suggested any plan of his own for the work of the Commission. Sir A. Clark Kerr was therefore instructed to try to arrange joint action with Mr. Harriman.

¹ The Foreign Office continued to receive from Polish Underground sources detailed accounts (which were supported to some extent by the actual announcements of the Lublin Government) of severe measures taken to break up the Underground movement and to arrest 'anti-Lublin' Poles. These accounts were also confirmed by the French Representative with the Lublin Government. There was thus no doubt that the Lublin Government, with the connivance, and indeed the active help of the Soviet authorities, were carrying out measures of 'liquidation' on a large scale in order to terrorise and destroy their opponents. (a)

(a) N3581/6/55.

CHAPTER XLI

British policy towards Yugoslavia, 1941–June 1944¹

(i)

The situation in Yugoslavia after the capitulation of the Yugoslav army: British policy towards the Cetniks and the Partisans to the end of 1942.

THE treatment of Yugoslavia by the Germans and Italians, after the capitulation of the Yugoslav army in April 1941, was a grim instance of their lack of constructive statesmanship. The conquerors, and particularly the Germans, used their powers with the utmost savagery. They employed as their agents pathological and criminal types; they stirred up and exploited local feuds and, without thought for the future, relied solely on force and terrorism to maintain a hateful and hated authority. Within a few months they had reduced the country to a condition of semi-anarchy as frightful as in any part of Europe under their control.

The conquerors at once broke up the Yugoslav State. The Germans annexed one-half to two-thirds of Slovene territory,² and allowed the Italians to take the rest. The Italians treated their new Slovene subjects with some slight consideration. The Germans introduced their familiar machinery of murder in an attempt to destroy the whole of the Slovene intelligentsia and the Catholic clergy, and to carry out—in the most cruel conditions—large scale deportations for forced labour.

¹ The purpose of this chapter is to recount the main developments in British policy, from the Foreign Office angle of view, towards Yugoslavia between the capitulation of the army and the liberation of the country. The chapter does not attempt a full analysis of the extremely complex internal conditions during the period of enemy occupation; it deals with the military aspect of British policy only to the extent necessary to explain the attitude of the Foreign Office. In particular, while summarising the somewhat contradictory evidence available at the time to the Foreign Office regarding the collaboration of General Mihailović and his commanders with the forces of the Axis, the chapter does not claim to give an independent judgment on the extent of this collaboration. Marshal Tito was also accused at times of collaboration with the Axis. It is, on the whole, fairly safe to assume that evidence about General Mihailović coming from Marshal Tito or his entourage is as unreliable as evidence from the side of General Mihailović about the Partisans. In any case, it is important—from the point of view of assessing British policy—to keep in mind the scrappiness of the information about Yugoslavia received by the Foreign Office at least until 1943.

² The district of Prekomurje was given to Hungary. The German annexations included the northern half of Carniola, and most of the area which before 1918 had formed the provinces of Styria and Carinthia.

The Germans also set up an 'Independent' Croat State, nominally as a kingdom under the Duke of Spoleto—a member of the House of Savoy—but actually controlled by the Croatian terrorist Pavelić¹ with the support of German and Italian troops. This Croat State included the former Croatia–Slavonia, Bosnia, Herzegovina, and parts of Dalmatia. The larger part of the Dalmatian coast and most of the islands were directly annexed to Italy. Pavelić, with the acquiescence, and indeed positive support of the occupying forces, organised in 1941 a systematic massacre of Croatian Jews and of Serbs through the 'independent' State, especially in northern and western Bosnia. The number of victims is unknown: the figures are probably not less than 50,000 Jews and between 50,000 and 100,000 Serbs.

The greater part of the remainder of the Yugoslav State was partitioned or annexed. Montenegro became an Italian protectorate; the Italians were unable to exercise much control over it, though for a time they planned to convert it into an 'independent kingdom' under their authority. Yugoslav Macedonia was given to Bulgaria. Serbia itself was held under German military occupation, with a German-controlled government headed, after August 1941, by the Serb General Nedić, a former Minister of War. General Nedić was not a 'Quisling' in the worst sense of the term; that is to say, he was not a willing collaborationist like Pavelić: he had submitted to the occupying Powers because he thought that further resistance would mean not only useless loss of life, but even the extermination of his countrymen.²

In spite of the disruption of the State and the capitulation of the regular army, the Axis forces continued to meet civil disobedience, sabotage and guerrilla opposition in large parts of Yugoslavia to an extent unparalleled in any other occupied country. Over large areas German and German-sponsored terrorism would have compelled even a docile people to do what they could to save their lives. The population of Yugoslavia was not docile, and their country offered excellent means of resistance. The mountain areas—especially in Serbia—provided suitable territory for guerrilla activities. Guerrilla warfare had been familiar to the Serbs, in particular, since the time of the Turkish domination. There was

¹ Ante Pavelić, a lawyer in Zagreb, left Croatia after the assumption of dictatorial powers by King Alexander of Yugoslavia in 1929. Pavelić settled in Italy in 1931 where he organised anti-Serbian terrorist groups. He was concerned in the successful plot for the murder of King Alexander in 1936. Mussolini and Hitler appear to have been jointly responsible for sending him into Croatia in 1941 and enabling him to establish his terrorist régime. (The Duke of Spoleto never set foot in his 'kingdom'.) Pavelić escaped to South America in 1945 and appears to have died in a German hospital in Madrid in 1959.

² Before General Nedić took office the Germans had announced that 100 Serbs would be killed as a reprisal for the killing of a German soldier, and even for the desertion of a local official to the guerrillas.

in existence an organisation known as the Cetniks (from 'Ceta', an armed band) which had its origins in the guerrilla fighting between Serbs and Turkish forces before and during the War of Liberation. After 1918 this organisation was extended throughout Yugoslavia to provide what might be called a guerrilla militia in time of war. The Cetniks remained, however, predominantly Serb, and, through their association before 1941 with a centralising and dictatorial type of government, were distrusted especially in Croatia.

The possibility of guerrilla resistance had also been increased, paradoxically, by the speed of the German victory. This victory had been won by rapidly moving armoured columns which had bypassed large numbers of infantry. Many of these latter escaped capture, and found their way to their homes without surrendering their arms. The capitulation of the army took place even before Yugoslav mobilisation had been completed. Hence many units far away from the area of fighting dispersed with their arms, and with such military stores as they could lay hands on in their own area.

Owing to the ferocity of the enemy counter-action, the measures taken to split up the country politically, and the violence of political disputes before 1941 in Yugoslavia itself—particularly between Serbs and Croats—there was from the first no overriding unity among the guerrilla bands and no figures likely to secure general support in the co-ordination of resistance. In any case the geography of the mountain regions and the character of this small-scale warfare would have made unified or co-ordinated effort extremely difficult, if not impossible, at all events in the earliest stages of resistance.

For some time neither the Foreign Office nor the British military authorities were able to find out what was happening in the mountains of Yugoslavia. Even when they were able to piece together information about the guerrilla activities, the British authorities had no arms and supplies to spare; for that matter, they had at this time no means of getting them into Yugoslavia. British policy towards local resistance in Yugoslavia as elsewhere was based on the sound view that premature attempts at insurrection should be discouraged since they would have little military result and would merely add more savage reprisals to the miseries which the peoples under enemy rule had to endure.

This view was also held by Colonel Mihailović, the most prominent Cetnik leader in Serbia—though not the official head of the organisation. Colonel Mihailović was an officer with a good record in the First World War. He had escaped capture by the Germans, and had established himself with a small group of officers and men in the mountains of western Serbia. He was joined by volunteers, and from his mountain refuge hoped to organise resistance at a favourable time against the enemy. He knew well enough

that this time had not yet come. Colonel Mihailović's political views were pan-Serb; he was thus unlikely to get the confidence of the Croats and Slovenes, or indeed of any Yugoslavs—least of all the Communists—who were opposed to a restoration of Serb hegemony or a return to the political methods of the pre-war régime.

The German attack on Russia, in June 1941, had consequences in Yugoslavia which put Colonel Mihailović in a difficult position. The Yugoslav Communists had begun to organise guerrilla bands. The Communists were, in fact, already an underground party before the war—the Yugoslav Government had declared the party illegal in 1929. Although they were few in numbers, they included men who had long experience of persecution; many of them had fought in the Spanish Civil War. They thus tended to become the leaders of Partisan groups outside the area of Colonel Mihailović's influence. The most important figure on the Communist side to emerge from these Partisan groups was a certain Josip Broz. Broz, like many other Communists, used a pseudonym—his choice was Tito. He was a Croat of peasant stock (born in 1892). In his youth he was a metal-worker. (a) He served in the Austrian army in the First World War and was captured by the Russians. He joined the Red Army, and apparently did not return to Croatia until 1923. He became one of the organisers of the Yugoslav Communist Party, and was imprisoned for illegal activities. Although he had not fought in Spain, he had been engaged in the underground work of sending volunteers to the Spanish Republican forces. Until the summer of 1941 he took the usual Communist line that the war was an imperialist quarrel with which the workers were not concerned.

The entry of Russia into the war not only changed the attitude of the Yugoslav Communists, but gave the peasantry, who were by tradition Russophil though not Communist, a new hope of liberation. It was thus easy for the Communists to take the lead in stirring up a general rising. The massacres of Serbs organised by Pavelić in the kingdom of Croatia also resulted in Serb armed resistance—where possible—in Bosnia. Colonel Mihailović regarded a general rising as premature. He realised that, although he now claimed to have about 50,000 Cetniks under his orders, he had not sufficient resources to do much serious damage to the enemy. As before, he was anxious not to provoke the Germans to take reprisals on the population in general, whereas the Communists, apart from their concern to provide at least some diversion of German forces from Russia, made it their policy to take no account of German reprisals upon the inhabitants in the area of their activities. To a considerable extent indeed these reprisals fell on the local officials and the more

(a) R9908/6/92(1945).

prosperous members of the countryside whom the Communists had no wish to spare.

Colonel Mihailović, however, saw that if he took no part in the rising, he would be blamed for its failure, and that the leadership of guerrilla resistance would pass out of the control of himself and the Cetniks and into the hands of the Communists, with the result that, after the war, the latter would use their position to set up a Communist State in Yugoslavia. Colonel Mihailović, therefore, felt obliged to come forward as the organiser of resistance. A broadcast appeal by him was picked up in August by the British. In September 1941 a British liaison officer, Major Hudson, was landed on the coast of Montenegro and made his way to Colonel Mihailović's headquarters. The information reaching Great Britain was still uncertain, and from scattered sources, but it was enough at the end of October to convince the Foreign Office that the rising was becoming almost a national revolt.

- (a) The Soviet Government at this time, through M. Maisky, expressed a wish that the insurgents should be helped, and that in any case British and Russian policy towards the Yugoslav should be co-ordinated. The difficulty about co-ordination was the the Cetniks and the Partisans had already begun to fight one another. Such fighting between semi-independent and rival local groups, reflecting the bitter political feuds of the past as well as the present, was almost inevitable. Each party accused the other of aggression, and in view of the general lack of discipline and the fact that fighting broke out in more than one place, each may have been right. It was also fairly clear that, if they had to make a choice, the Russians would support the Communists rather than the Cetniks. The former would be more directly subservient to Russian demands, and their willingness to act without regard to the consequences from the point of view of the civilian population met the immediate need of the Russians to secure every possible diversion of German troops. On a long-term policy also support of the Communists would be to Russians advantage after the war. Hence the Russian idea of 'co-ordinating' British and Soviet policy would mean allowing the Partisans to suppress the Cetniks; this motive would become increasingly dominant as the Russian military position improved, and there was less reason to sacrifice long-term political interests to short-term military necessities.

On the British side there was also a conflict between a short-term and a long-term policy. The military authorities in the Middle East, while they were careful to avoid anything which would increase the sufferings of the occupied countries, were concerned primarily

(a) R9331/162/92.

with short-term factors, that is to say, with securing the maximum diversion of Axis forces, and the maximum damage by sabotage, etc. to Axis communications. They were therefore inclined, without much regard to long-term political considerations, or, for that matter, without much understanding of them, to support in Yugoslavia the guerrilla groups who were showing the greatest immediate activity against the enemy. Obviously, if British arms and supplies, which could not easily be spared, or brought into Yugoslavia, were sent to any resistance groups, the military authorities wanted them to go where the greatest immediate use would be made of them.

The Foreign Office, on the other hand, while taking full account of the military point of view, had also to consider British long-term interests. Yugoslavia was the most important of the countries in the Balkan area. It was not therefore to British interests to put the Yugoslav Communists into a position which would enable them after the war to transform Yugoslavia into a Communist state under Russian influence. The fact that the Communist Party was in a small minority was hardly relevant in view of the possibilities open to them if, with Russian support, they obtained control of the machinery of State, and were free to liquidate their opponents.

Furthermore, the British Government—and the British people—were under an obligation to support, as far as possible, King Peter of Yugoslavia and the Yugoslav Government in exile which had taken a stand against the Axis Powers. There was indeed no question of enforcing after the war the return of a monarchy associated with a dictatorial régime disliked by large numbers of the population. The point at issue was that the question of the post-war régime in Yugoslavia should not be prejudiced by handing over control in advance to one party. Long-term British policy coincided with short-term policy to the extent that it aimed at the reconciliation of Partisans and Cetniks in a common resistance to the enemy, and in an agreement which would avoid the danger of civil war after the liberation of the country. From the end of 1941 the Foreign Office attempted this policy of reconciliation. The policy, however, had little response in Yugoslavia itself, and was increasingly difficult to maintain because Cetniks and Partisans—Mihailović and Tito—alike realised that, whereas the war against the Axis would not be won in Yugoslavia, their own local struggle for the political control of the country would be decided largely by the respective positions which they secured for themselves in the hour of liberation.

These considerations led Colonel Mihailović, in particular, along the dangerous line of suspending action against the Axis, and even allowing his subordinates to compromise themselves and him by collaboration with the enemy for the political purpose of suppressing the Partisans. The inevitable result was that the weight of British

military opinion turned more strongly towards the other group. The Foreign Office could not contest the military advantages from the British point of view of supporting the resistance groups which were fighting the enemy;¹ they continued none the less to work for reconciliation, though they realised that, by building up and supplying the Partisans, British policy was putting the Communist leaders into a position from which, after the war, they could seize, or rather retain power for themselves alone.

- (a) Unfortunately the King and his Government in exile were as much of a burden as a help in British attempts to reconcile the Yugoslav factions. The Government was representative in the sense that at the time of the *coup d'état* of March 27, 1941, it was made up of leading members of all the major political parties except the Communists and the Moslems. This very fact, however, was to some extent a source of weakness. There had been no representative Government on western parliamentary lines in Yugoslavia since King Alexander established a royal dictatorship in 1929; thus the politicians now met in London, with time on their hands, against a background of deep internal dissension. Many of the Serb Ministers had been out of office for more than a decade; the leading Croat Minister had been an exile in Switerland for ten years. The Slovene leaders were new and untrained. General Simović, the Prime Minister, was unpopular, and associated with the military defeat; the King was young and inexperienced and seemed unlikely, by temperament or manner, to win a commanding position for himself.

In these circumstances the Government split into opposing groups, and failed to reach agreement on questions of principle or policy. In January 1942 the Cabinet resigned on the ground that they could not work with General Simović. The King then appointed a new Ministry with Professor Yovanović as Prime Minister, and Colonel Mihailović as Minister of War. For a long time, however, the contact of the Government with Yugoslavia was slight. They appeared to exercise little or no influence over Colonel Mihailović's policy, and were of little use in trying to bring about a working agreement between him and the Partisans.

- The first attempt by the British Government to reconcile the factions was made while General Simović was still Prime Minister.
- (b) On November 13, 1941, General Simović reported to the British Government a message from Colonel Mihailović that the Communists (i.e. the Partisans) were attacking him. General Simović

¹ The Foreign Office inclined to think that the military authorities were exaggerating the value of the Partisans' activities, but, obviously, they could not set themselves as judges in matters of military concern.

(a) R10196/17/19 (1943). (b) R9873/162/92.

at once asked the Soviet Government to warn the Communists not to attack the Cetniks, but to collaborate with them against the Germans. The Foreign Office instructed Sir S. Cripps to support (a) General Simović's representations and also asked the General to warn Colonel Mihailović against taking reprisals.

The British policy of reconciliation seemed at first to have some success. Emissaries from the two groups reached a formal agreement on November 28, 1941, for collaboration against the Germans. The agreement was not kept. As the Germans broke up the rebellion, Colonel Mihailović retired into the mountains, and reverted to his former policy of keeping his Cetniks from any large action against the Axis forces until the military situation was more favourable.¹ The greater part of the Partisan forces were also driven back, and took refuge in the Sanjak. Colonel Mihailović now broke openly with the Partisans, though, owing to the difficulty of communicating with him, little was known in Great Britain of what he was doing. It was also impossible at this time to send him supplies.

In the spring of 1942 contact was regained with Colonel Mihailović, (b) but in the depressing form of a message that he was still being disturbed in his work by Communists who were receiving support from the Axis Powers with the object of keeping both Yugoslav groups occupied in fighting each other. The Foreign Office informed M. Maisky of this message, and suggested that the Soviet Government might be able to prevent Communist interference. This approach had no results. It was clear from a statement by the Russian Minister to the Yugoslav Government in London that the Soviet Government had already given a meaning of their own to the 'co-ordination' of Soviet and British policy. The Minister said the Soviet Government did not want to get mixed up in Yugoslav disputes; that the part played by Colonel Mihailović had been much exaggerated, and that it was doubtful whether he was making a serious contribution to the Allied cause. Other evidence at this time also suggested that the Soviet Government did not intend to co-operate in securing a united front in Yugoslavia, and that they had decided to back the Partisans and were probably in touch with them. These latter accused Colonel Mihailović of collaboration with the enemy.

Another attempt to secure Soviet help in reconciling the Cetniks and the Partisans was made in July 1942. Sir A. Clark Kerr was (c) instructed to suggest to the Soviet Government that they might broadcast to the Communists that General (as he had now become)

¹ On October 21, 1941, the Germans had massacred some 6000 inhabitants (including boys and youths of 15-18) of the Serb industrial town of Kragujevac as a reprisal for Partisan activities.

(a) R9874/162/92. (b) R2515, 2855/178/92. (c) R4400/178/92.

Mihailović was fighting for the Allied cause and that all good Communists should co-operate with him. We would repeat at the same time our own appeals to General Mihailović to do everything possible to establish friendly and co-operative relations with the Communists, and would ask the Yugoslav Government to make a similar appeal.

- (a) These instructions to Sir A. Clark Kerr were cancelled when M. Maisky informed the Foreign Office that the Soviet authorities were unwilling to join in attempting to check the activities of the Partisans against the Cetniks. The reason given for the Soviet refusal was that they did not trust General Mihailović, and regarded him as in touch with General Nedić at Belgrade. The Foreign Office considered that the allegations against General Mihailović were merely a pretext on the part of the Soviet Government to enable them to forgo the short-term advantages of a united front in Yugoslavia in favour of their long-term interest in spreading Communism in the country.

- Although they thought it useless to make another formal approach in Moscow, the Foreign Office decided at least to put their view to (b) M. Maisky in London. They told him that General Mihailović had reported several times that he remained in touch with General Nedić and had indeed claimed that many of the latter's officers were loyal to him.¹ It was therefore wrong to assume that these

¹ The Foreign Office considered at this time that the relations between General Mihailović and General Nedić might well be taken as a sign that the latter's own collaboration with the Axis Powers was half-hearted.

It should be added that, in addition to the scrappiness of the evidence available about conditions in Yugoslavia, the relationship between the Cetniks and General Nedić was itself most complicated. A number of Cetniks, including M. Pečanac, the official leader of the organisation, had gone over to General Nedić after the unsuccessful revolt in 1941. These Cetniks were recognised (though not with much confidence) by the Germans as 'legal' in contrast with the 'illegal' Cetniks who supported General Mihailović. The distinction was, in fact, never very clear. Many 'legal' Cetniks reinsured themselves by making contact with General Mihailović, and many 'illegal' Cetniks acted as 'legal' in order to obtain arms for use against the Partisans and, ultimately, the Germans and Italians. In December 1942, the 'legal' Cetniks were dissolved as such, and incorporated into General Nedić's forces.

- (c) In the conclusions to a report of April 1945, on the disintegration of General Mihailović's movement, Colonel Deakin (see below, p.296) summarised the position shortly in terms which at that date the Foreign Office, in general, agreed. He pointed out that General Mihailović's original plan had been to build up a nationalist resistance organisation, with the minimum of provocation towards the Germans until the Allies landed to liberate the country. The Cetniks would then appear, and come to the assistance of the Allied forces. This plan involved collaboration with General Nedić, but it might also be described as 'infiltration into a collaborationist organisation'. From the Cetnik point of view, such collaboration—or infiltration—was necessary in order to obtain supplies and arms, primarily from the Italians, but also from the Germans. These arms would be used against the Partisans, and ultimately against the Germans and Italians who had supplied them. Colonel Deakin thought that to the last General Mihailović and his staff failed to understand the British view of their collaboration with the Axis forces; they believed that we must share their view that Communist control was a worse evil than German occupation.

General Mihailović's own words, at his trial in 1946, that he had been 'caught up in a whirlwind' may indeed be taken as a fair description of his position.

- (a) R4788/178/92. (b) R4788/178/92. (c) R8168/21/92.

relations constituted evidence of General Mihailović's untrustworthiness. We therefore hoped that the Soviet Government would reconsider their decision not to give any assistance to General Mihailović.

On August 7, 1942, M. Maisky communicated to the Foreign Office a copy of a note addressed to the Yugoslav Minister at Kuibyshev containing a number of accusations that General Mihailović and his Cetniks were collaborating with the Italians against the Partisans.¹ These Russian charges were considered on (a) August 8 at a meeting in the Foreign Office of all British authorities concerned with the organisation of resistance in Yugoslavia. The evidence at this stage from British sources of information did not bear out the Russian statements that General Mihailović was collaborating with the Axis forces. Sir O. Sargent pointed out at the meeting that, whether or not General Mihailović was receiving help from the Axis forces, the bitterness caused by the internal conflicts in Yugoslavia might well lead to this result. It was clear in any case that General Mihailović was now causing less trouble than the Partisans to the Axis forces. Our own short-term interests therefore would lead us to support the Partisans, but on a long-term view we should do better to continue our support of General Mihailović, while trying to bring about a reconciliation between him and the Partisans.

The conclusions reached at the meeting were that we should make another appeal to the Soviet Government, and that we should consult our liaison officer with General Mihailović on the desirability of reminding the latter that our assistance to him was given on the understanding that he would do his utmost to reach an agreement with the Partisans. We should also consider whether we could ourselves come into direct contact with the Partisans.

On August 20, Mr. Eden wrote to M. Maisky that in our view the charges against General Mihailović originated in propaganda from (b) Partisan sources, and could not be regarded as based on objective and accurate information. Mr. Eden also called M. Maisky's attention to an article in the *Soviet War News* of August 12 stating that only the Partisans were resisting the Axis forces, and that General Mihailović was taking no part in the resistance. Mr. Eden hoped that the Soviet Government would issue instructions to prevent allegations of this kind. He pointed out the dangers of the situation, and asked for a full and frank discussion on the matter with the Soviet Government.

¹ The Yugoslav Chargé d'Affaires in London told the Foreign Office that the Yugoslav Government intended to answer the note with an 'indignant and categorical negative'. (c) (a) R5212/1990/92. (b) R5254/178/92. (c) R5479, 5798/178/92.

No reply had been received from the Soviet Government at the beginning of October 1942. The Foreign Office continued to think that, whatever the Soviet attitude might be, we should maintain our support of General Mihailović in view of his potential value, both military and political, at the end of the war. If he disappeared, Yugoslavia might break up after the war into several Soviet republics under Russian control. The Foreign Office realised, however, that at this time, for political and tactical reasons, General Mihailović was not risking his forces by undertaking military activities against the Axis; that he would not agree to any such activity until an Allied front had been formed in the Balkans, and that his declared aim was to liquidate the Partisan leaders and persuade the rank and file to join his own organisation. On their side the Partisans were no less determined to get rid of General Mihailović and his movement.

- (b) At the end of October 1942, the Foreign Office authorised the British Broadcasting Corporation to mention the Partisan activities in their propaganda to Yugoslavia. These references were much resented by General Mihailović and the Yugoslav Government, but were continued in order to stir the General into action. The Commander-in-Chief, Middle East, had already sent a message to him in September 1942, through Major Hudson, the British Liaison Officer, urging him to attack enemy lines of communication. The Yugoslav Government made a similar appeal, but without effect.

Thus at the end of the year it was evident that General Mihailović was continuing his policy of avoiding action likely to lead to serious reprisals, with the consequent weakening of his own authority, and that he was trying to consolidate his position against Partisan encroachment in the districts under his control. There was now also evidence (though the Foreign Office found it difficult to assess) that, indirectly, through his subordinate Djurišić who commanded in Montenegro, he was in contact with the Italians and would not act against them because they were supplying his supporters with food and also because he hoped, when the Axis collapsed, to seize all the Italian arms and equipment.

- The British Government were thus faced with the alternatives of supporting a leader who, at all events at the time, was giving no help to the Allied cause or of withdrawing support from him. In the latter case, even if British support were not given to the Partisans, the result at the end of the war might be a Communist revolution or a violent civil war in Yugoslavia. The Foreign Office considered, in December 1942, sending a message to General Mihailović that we were supplying him with arms in order to fight the Axis, not the

(a) R5973, 6882/178/92. (b) R7027, 8015/178/92. (c) R6315, 7841/178/92. (d) R8261/178/92. (e) R8261, 8721, 8994/178/92; R2182/2/92 (1943).

Partisans and the Croats, and that unless we had more satisfactory reports of his activities, we should have to reconsider our policy. This message was not sent, partly because a more senior officer, Colonel Bailey,¹ had just been appointed as liaison officer with General Mihailović, and was about to go to Yugoslavia, and partly because the War Office, in fact, had just congratulated General Mihailović on the exploits of the Cetniks. The Foreign Office, therefore, decided to take the matter up again with the Soviet Government as soon as Sir A. Clark Kerr, who was on leave, went back to Moscow.²

(ii)

The problem of General Mihailović: decision to send a mission to the Partisans: British message of May 9 to General Mihailović: summary of the position at the end of May 1943.

Colonel Bailey's reports early in 1943 suggested that we should (a) maintain our support of General Mihailović and have no dealings with the Partisans because their cruelty and ruthlessness were antagonising and exhausting the civil population. Colonel Bailey also thought that the Partisans were being gradually reduced by the Axis forces. The Foreign Office doubted whether Colonel Bailey was in a position to secure impartial and objective information about the strength or behaviour of the Partisans. Moreover, information received from the Chiefs of Staff gave the impression that the (b) Partisans were holding down some twenty-five to thirty enemy divisions whereas there were only fifteen divisions in the area of General Mihailović's forces. In any case General Mihailović remained inactive except for occasional sabotage operations, and there were more reports of his co-operation with the Italians³.

Thus by the end of February, 1943, the Foreign Office felt it (c) necessary to modify their policy. The aim of this policy remained

¹ Colonel Bailey had lived in Yugoslavia since 1928. He had served in the Balkan Section of S.O.E. as an engineer in a Yugoslav mining company.

S.O.E.: (Special Operations Executive) was set up in 1940 under the direction of Mr. Dalton to deal with subversive movements in Europe. Lord Selborne took over the direction of S.O.E. in February, 1942.

² Sir A. Clark Kerr did not return to Moscow until the end of February, 1943.

³ It should be added, however, that in June, 1943, Colonel Bailey reported that he had overestimated the extent of this collaboration. The American view at the beginning of May, 1943, was that no evidence existed of collaboration between General Mihailović and the Germans, but that he had received some supplies and equipment from the Italians, probably in exchange for prisoners, and had not been fighting against them. It was uncertain whether he had actually taken part with the Italians in actions against the Partisans. *F.R.U.S.*, 1943, II, 1005.

(a) R978, 1294/2/92. (b) R1513/2/92. (c) R1346/2/92. (d) R5069/143/92.

unchanged. On a short term our objective was to secure the maximum possible resistance to the enemy, and to build up an organisation for use in the case of an invasion of the Balkans; our long-term policy required the re-establishment, probably on a federal basis, of the former Yugoslav State within its former territories. Hitherto these long-term interests had led us to support General Mihailović in order to prevent anarchy and Communist control. We had tried to get Russian collaboration in an effort to reconcile the Cetniks and the Partisans. The Foreign Office suggested making another approach to the Soviet Government, though they thought it unlikely to succeed. They also considered that it would be a mistake to give up supporting General Mihailović, since he controlled the greater part of Serbia. On the other hand if we continued to give him our sole support, and ignored the Partisans (and the Croat Peasant party) we should be committing ourselves to General Mihailović's pan-Serb views with regard to the future of Yugoslavia and risking a direct collision with the Russians on a large question of policy. From a military point of view we might find ourselves opposed—or, at all events, given only half-hearted support—if later on we began operations on the Dalmatian coast or in Croatia.

The Foreign Office therefore suggested that we should try to get into contact with the Partisans, and thus support both sides in their resistance to the enemy. This plan might help us to reconcile the two groups, or at least prevent them from fighting each other, since we could state clearly that we should withdraw our support from either of the two sides found to be using our arms to attack the other. The military authorities in the Mediterranean and Middle East at this time began to take a similar view. They were increasingly dissatisfied with General Mihailović's passivity; they also wanted the intensification of guerrilla activities as part of the 1943 campaign.

- (a) Towards the end of March, 1943, the Prime Minister agreed that we should send British officers into Croatia and Slovenia in order to make contact with the Partisans; we could then judge from the reports of these officers whether we would give the Partisan movement material support. Meanwhile on March 9 Sir A. Clark Kerr,
- (b) in a conversation with M. Molotov, had tried once more to secure joint action with the Soviet Government. The Russian response was entirely negative; it was now obvious that if we ignored the Partisans we should be driving them into complete dependence on the Russians.

While they were exploring the possibility of supporting both parties in Yugoslavia, the Foreign Office were also doing their best to stir General Mihailović into action. On February 28, 1943, the (c) General made a speech, in the presence of Colonel Bailey, and at a

(a) R2647/2/92. (b) R2182/2/92. (c) R2030, 2538/2/92.

small gathering of his followers, in which he complained bitterly that the English, according to their 'traditional perfidy', were trying to use the Serbs for their own strategic ends and that King Peter and his Government were virtually prisoners in English hands. General Mihailović went on to say that it was his duty to exterminate the Partisans, and that, as long as the Italians remained his only adequate source of assistance, he would not change his attitude towards them. He needed no further contact with the western democracies whose sole aim was to win the war at the expense of others.

The Foreign Office realised how small was the assistance which we had been able to send to General Mihailović; they felt, however, that they could not allow him to speak in this way, and that it was necessary to come to an understanding with him over the terms on which we would continue our support. Hence on March 29, in a note signed (in Mr. Eden's absence) by the Prime Minister, the Foreign Office pointed out to the Yugoslav Prime Minister, M. Yovanović, that, although General Mihailović might have spoken in a moment of irritation over the small amount of help which we could send to him, he was Minister of War in the Yugoslav Government. We could not justify to the British public or our Allies the support of a movement whose leader maintained that his enemies were not the German and Italian invaders of his country, but his fellow-Yugoslavs, and chief among them men who were fighting these invaders.

Sir George Rendel, British Ambassador to the Yugoslav Government, was instructed to say, when giving the note to the Yugoslavs, that we hoped to be able to increase our supplies to General Mihailović but that we should not do so until we were assured that he would not use these supplies for attacking his fellow-countrymen in collaboration with our Italian enemies. In approving this note the Prime Minister agreed that General Mihailović's attitude was intolerable. The Prime Minister wrote, however, to Sir A. Cadogan (a) that we could do practically nothing for the General and his people, and that he might naturally ask himself how he could keep alive until the United Nations were able to bring some help to him. He was certainly maltreating us, but the Prime Minister thought that he was also double-crossing the Italians. His position was terrible, and it was not much use preaching to the 'toad beneath the harrow'. We should not forget the very little help we could give.

Early in May 1943, the Foreign Office received a copy of a reply from General Mihailović in answer to the message sent to him by (b) the Yugoslav Government. The reply was not entirely convincing. General Mihailović did not reject the British demands; he affirmed

(a) R2538/2/92. (b) R3107, 3753, 3995/2/92.

his determination to fight the Axis, but did not appear to have changed his attitude towards the Italians or towards the Partisans. The Foreign Office thought that they should get a more definite answer, and that if we were to work successfully with General Mihailović and help to build up his movement with a view to the future, the General must be brought to accept certain basic principles for the conduct of his policy in Yugoslavia. With the approval of the Chiefs of Staff, therefore, Mr. Eden (in the Prime Minister's absence) on May 9, 1943, sent a note to General Mihailović through the agency of the Yugoslav Government laying down five such principles:

- (1) The primary aim of General Mihailović's policy must be resistance to the Axis.
- (2) For this purpose the closest collaboration through Colonel Bailey with the British military authorities in the Middle East was essential.
- (3) All collaboration with the Italians must cease, and there must be no contact or collaboration with General Nedić.
- (4) Efforts must be made to co-operate with all other guerrilla groups in Croatia and Slovenia.
- (5) Efforts must also be made to reach agreement with the Partisans in Serbia, and no operations must be undertaken against them except in self-defence.

On this basis we were prepared to support General Mihailović to an increasing extent and to strengthen Colonel Bailey's mission by sending out more officers. Mr. Eden wrote privately to the Yugoslav Prime Minister that if the General rejected these terms we might have to change our policy.

- (a) The Yugoslav Government were willing to transmit the note to General Mihailović though they denied that he had collaborated with General Nedić or the Italians. The note did not reach General
- (b) Mihailović until May 26. The matter was now complicated, however, by instructions sent through the military authorities in the Middle East on May 26 directly—and without previous consultation with the Foreign Office—to Colonel Bailey. These instructions stated that
- (c) the war in the Mediterranean had reached a stage at which Allied offensives could be regarded as imminent, and that General Mihailović must fulfil his pledges of co-operation. The only way of synchronising his activities with those of the Allies was for him to co-ordinate them with the plans of General Headquarters, Middle East, within whose sphere he was included. General Mihailović was

(a) R4186/2/92. (b) R4793/2/92. (c) R5152/143/92.

asked to break off collaboration with the Axis and to withdraw his forces across the river Ibar into Serbia.

General Mihailović replied to the note sent through the Yugoslav (a) Government that he was prepared to accept our five points, but he objected strongly to the order from Cairo to confine himself to Serbia and thus make way for the Partisans elsewhere. Colonel Bailey made matters worse by showing him the whole text of the telegram.¹ (b)

The Foreign Office and S.O.E. discussed the situation which had arisen from the issue of these contradictory instructions. They sent a combined memorandum to the Chiefs of Staff pointing out that (c) the premises upon which Middle East Defence Committee had issued their instructions were not correct or at all events not substantiated. These premises were that General Mihailović had been defeated in Serbia by the Partisans, and that the latter were now the most formidable anti-Axis element in Yugoslavia. According to all the information available in London (and checked by the War Office) General Mihailović had not been defeated by the Partisans, and still represented an important and disciplined organisation upon which resistance could be based. In any case the proposed change of policy raised political issues of the first importance. The Foreign Office and S.O.E. recommended that their policy should be maintained and that the instructions sent to General Mihailović by the Middle East Defence Committee should be withdrawn.²

The Chiefs of Staff replied on June 17 that in their view the (d) Middle East Defence Committee was right. The Foreign Office, with the agreement of S.O.E., replied to the Chiefs of Staff on June 22 accepting the proposal for supplying arms to the Partisans on condition that they were not used against General Mihailović. The Chiefs of Staff then agreed to the withdrawal of the Cairo instructions. Mr. Eden sent a minute to the Prime Minister on June 24 embodying the new proposals. The minute stated that hitherto we had been supporting General Mihailović to the best of our ability. It had not always been easy to justify this policy in view of General Mihailović's comparative inaction, reports of his collaboration with the Italians, and his own pan-Serb and dictatorial tendencies and his skirmishes with the Partisans. On the long-term view, however, there was

¹ The text stated that General Mihailović meant nothing as a fighting force west of the Kopaonik mountainous area, that his groups in Montenegro, Herzegovina, and Bosnia, were either liquidated or were collaborating with the Axis, and that he could hardly be said to have any support in Croatia, Slavonia and Slovenia.

² Colonel Bailey had meanwhile telegraphed that he agreed with the Foreign Office view.

(a) R5203/2/92. (b) R6462/2/92. (c) R5202/2/92. (d) R5330, 5331, 5502, 5542/143/92.

no doubt that our interest lay in backing General Mihailović and thereby enabling him to preserve Yugoslavia, or at least Serbia, from chaos and anarchy when the country was liberated. Moreover General Mihailović had been in a tight corner and our help to him had been the merest trickle. Hence there was some excuse for his occasional accusations that our support amounted to little more than words.

On the other hand there was also no doubt that the Partisans had been causing the Axis the most trouble, and that they now constituted a military organisation to be reckoned with. The Chiefs of Staff had asked that sabotage and other operations by guerrillas and resistance groups should be supported as far as possible. The Foreign Office had therefore reconsidered their policy towards the Partisans. The information about them was vague, and, as a first step, the Foreign Office had agreed that S.O.E. should send agents to the Partisan and Croat groups in order to decide whether our military support was desirable and to try to bring about the unification of all the resistance movements in Yugoslavia. Direct contact had been established with most of the groups, who numbered about 65,000 men in Croatia, Herzegovina, Bosnia and Montenegro.

The Middle East Defence Committee had now suggested that Yugoslavia should be divided into territorial districts and that General Mihailović should be recognised and supported in eastern Serbia, the Partisans in Croatia, etc. They also recommended that the Communist Partisans and Croat guerrillas should be supplied with war material at once.

The Foreign Office agreed with the change of policy involved in this latter proposal on condition that the Partisans operating close to General Mihailović's forces should be required first to give an assurance that no operation should be carried out against General Mihailović. We had put a similar condition to General Mihailović with regard to the Partisans. We should continue our support of him if he accepted these conditions. The Foreign Office did not agree to the proposal to recognise the predominance of each group in certain districts, since this plan would be the first step towards breaking up the unity of the country which it was our policy to maintain. The Prime Minister approved Mr. Eden's minute and instructions were sent accordingly to the Middle East Defence Committee. General Mihailović was told that the Cairo message was cancelled, and that, as soon as he had accepted the conditions already laid down (about which a further telegram would be sent to him) the Commander-in-Chief, Middle East, would desire an exchange of views on operational possibilities.¹

¹ An *aide-mémoire* of July 6 to the State Department summed up this change of policy.
(continued on page 295)

General Mihailović did not reply to the message until the latter (a) half of August. He then accepted the terms laid down in the note,¹ but did not undertake any operation against the enemy forces. Information also reached the Foreign Office that he regarded his policy as justified on political and military grounds and did not intend to change it. Even so the Foreign Office hesitated to support a definite breach with him because his movement appeared to be the only resistance organisation in Serbia, and the transfer of British support to the Partisans would almost certainly have the long-range political consequences which we had been hoping to avoid.

King Peter himself took steps at this time to try to improve the status of his Government by getting rid of the factious disputes which, in spite of reshuffles of Ministers and changes of leadership, were greatly damaging Yugoslav reputation. On August 10, 1943, the King dismissed his Cabinet and set up in its place a non-political administration of officials under M. Purić, formerly Yugoslav Minister to France.² The sphere of the new Government was to be limited to the prosecution of the war and to practical measures necessary to secure the full collaboration of Yugoslavia with the Allies. The Government announced that it would not attempt to deal with controversial political problems, and that such problems, which included the post-war régime of the country, would be left to the free decision of the Yugoslav peoples after their liberation.

As a first stage towards the practical fulfilment of this mission, the King and his new Government left Great Britain in mid-September for Cairo in order to be in closer touch with the Yugoslav armed forces and with the Allied military authorities in whose hands lay the task of liberating Yugoslavia. Mr. Stevenson, who had succeeded Sir George Rendel in August as British Ambassador to the Yugoslav Government, went to Cairo with them.

(continued)

The *aide-mémoire* stated that the Partisans were now the most formidable anti-Axis party (b) outside Serbia, while General Mihailović's force, in spite of the defeat of the Montenegrin Chetniks in the recent German offensive, was still the chief resistance organisation in Serbia, where there was no appreciable number of Partisans. British support would now be extended to all elements of resistance in Yugoslavia, irrespective of their political colour. British policy would therefore be to continue to support General Mihailović provided that he accepted the British conditions, and also to supply the Croatian guerrillas and Communist Partisans with war material. The Partisans operating in close proximity to the forces of General Mihailović would first be required to give an assurance to the British liaison officers that no operations would be carried out against General Mihailović except in self-defence. British efforts to unify all resistance movements in Yugoslavia would continue, and for this purpose British liaison officers were being instructed to try to arrange a non-aggression agreement between General Mihailović and the Partisans. *F.R.U.S.*, 1943, II, 1018.

¹ He also pointed out that he had already accepted the terms in a message of June 2.

² M. Purić had left France in 1941.

(a) R7970/2/92. (b) R5782/2/92: R5330/143/92: Churchill Papers 510/13.

Meanwhile, in accordance with the earlier decision to make contact with the Partisans, General Tito had been offered, and—for obvious reasons—had accepted the establishment of a British liaison mission at his headquarters. Captain Deakin¹ was dropped by parachute towards the end of May 1943, near to General Tito's headquarters. After the decisions taken at the end of June supplies were sent to the Partisans; although it was easier to reach them than to get to General Mihailović in Serbia, the amount sent in during 1943 was small—partly owing to the difficulty of getting the requisite aircraft for the purpose. In accordance with the decisions agreed in June, the Partisans were informed that a condition of sending supplies was that they should not be used against the Cetniks except in self-defence.

(iii)

Brigadier Maclean's report on the Partisans, November 1943: British attempts to secure an agreement between the Royal Yugoslav Government and the Partisans: the question of the withdrawal of British support from General Mihailović.

- (a) In July 1943 (largely on the insistence of the Prime Minister) Brigadier Maclean² was appointed head of the liaison mission with General Tito. Brigadier Maclean arrived in Yugoslavia at the end of September and had his first interview with General Tito on the night of his arrival. At the end of October he left Yugoslavia for Cairo, where he drew up a report on the Partisan movement. This report reached the Foreign Office on November 12. In the report Brigadier Maclean wrote that the Partisan forces were dominant in Yugoslavia except in Old Serbia and Montenegro.
- (b) These forces amounted to 200,000 men and were well organised over large areas which had been entirely liberated from the enemy. The Partisans had established in the liberated areas an effective political organisation affording equal treatment to members of all races and religions. Although the members of the old political parties were still allowed some latitude (Brigadier Maclean did not explain how this qualification affected his statement about 'equal treatment'), the Partisan political organisation was overwhelmingly Communist and run on strictly party lines. The Partisans

¹ Captain (later Colonel) F. W. Deakin was a Fellow of Wadham College, Oxford, who had assisted Mr. Churchill in his work on *Marlborough, His Life and Times*.

² Mr. Maclean had been a member of the staff of the Foreign Office from 1933 to 1941. He resigned on March 9, 1941, and joined the army. He also entered Parliament. He was chosen to act as liaison officer with General Tito in July 1943, with the rank of Captain. His rank was raised first to that of Lieutenant-Colonel and then to Brigadier.

(a) R6982/117/92; R7050, 7150/143/92. (b) R11589/143/92.

were prepared to collaborate with all resistance groups except those of General Mihailović whom they accused of being a traitor and whom they were 'bent on exterminating'. Their attitude towards the monarchy was non-committal; they maintained that the question would have to be decided by the people after the war. Meanwhile they did not permit anti-monarchical propaganda.

The surrender of Italy had greatly increased their power. They had disarmed some six Italian divisions, and had invaded Italian territory. They had occupied Istria and the mountainous country between Trieste and the Austrian frontier. They had also surrounded Zagreb, recovered Split and, in the south, moved into Montenegro. Brigadier Maclean's conclusion was that the Partisan movement was not only a more considerable force than the British authorities had previously thought, but that it was likely to be a decisive factor in Yugoslavia after the war. Nothing less than armed intervention on a large scale would prevent it from taking power after the German withdrawal, whereas General Mihailović, whose policy was pan-Serb, anti-Croat, and strongly reactionary, was now discredited, and would have no prospect, even in the most favourable circumstances, of uniting the country. Brigadier Maclean therefore recommended that we should discontinue our support of General Mihailović and increase our aid to the Partisans.

Brigadier Maclean's report obviously had considerable influence in determining the policy of the Foreign Office. They considered (a) his estimate of the military and political strength of the Partisans to be correct as far as concerned Slovenia, Slavonia, Croatia, Dalmatia and Bosnia. He appeared to exaggerate their strength elsewhere, especially in Old Serbia, but his report showed that the policy of supporting both sides and attempting to reconcile General Mihailović and the Partisans was impracticable.

What, then, were we to do? The Foreign Office view was that if we continued our support of General Mihailović and ignored the Partisans we should be creating a situation in which the future régime of Yugoslavia would be decided by civil war, with the chances in favour of the Communists. The best we could hope for would be a compromise solution whereby Yugoslavia would be split into two independent States, one of them Communist, and including Croatia and Bosnia, and the other—Old Serbia—agrarian and monarchist. On a long-term view, however, we remained strongly opposed to the break-up of the Yugoslav State, and had been working for the restoration of this State within its pre-war frontiers on a unitary or federal basis. If, on the other hand, we abandoned General Mihailović, and gave our full support to the Partisans,

(a) R11589/143/92.

the most likely result would be a unified Yugoslavia in the form of a Communist State closely linked with the U.S.S.R. and employing terrorist methods to suppress opposition. There was only a bare possibility that we could persuade the Partisans to accept the King and the monarchy.

The Foreign Office could find no way out of this dilemma. They suggested, however, that a decision involving the withdrawal of support from General Mihailović should be delayed until we had more information about the feasibility of an arrangement between the King (without General Mihailović) and the Partisans. The lack of full and accurate information indeed added to the perplexities of the problem. Brigadier Maclean had referred to the information which General Tito had given to Captain Deakin on General Mihailović's alleged collaboration with the Germans, but General Tito's evidence could not be regarded as unbiased and objective.

- (a) During the latter part of November the Foreign Office received other reports of General Mihailović's alleged collaboration with General Nedić and with the Germans, but all the reports came from sources hostile to General Mihailović, and although the evidence of collaboration appeared conclusive in the case of some of General Mihailović's subordinates, the Foreign Office did not consider that they had adequate proof that the General himself had ordered or even connived at the action of those subordinates.¹

- (b) There was no doubt, however, that General Mihailović was of little immediate military value to the Allies, and on these grounds alone the Chiefs of Staff in London and the military authorities in the Mediterranean wanted to transfer our assistance to the Partisans. The Foreign Office—though for a time suspending judgment—thus inclined to favour an attempt to substitute for General Mihailović a man of more moderate views. We might then hope to continue to collaborate with those leaders of the Cetniks who were willing to fight the Germans, and we should not have abandoned the 'bare possibility' of bringing about a reconciliation between the Cetniks

- (c) ¹ The most important piece of evidence (which the Foreign Office regarded as reliable) at this time consisted of an agreement between the German Commander-in-Chief and one of General Mihailović's commanders in his (General Mihailović's) own area. A second case was of orders from General Mihailović for collaboration with General Nedić's forces against the Partisans. This evidence came from the British Liaison Officer with Djurić, one of General Mihailović's commanders in Pristina. Djurić, however, was not on good terms with General Mihailović and later went over to the Partisans. The same liaison officer reported in December that General Mihailović's commanders in the Pristina area had been ordered not to have anything to do with General Nedić without express instructions, and not to make contact with the Germans. Brigadier Armstrong also reported in December that General Mihailović was not collaborating with General Nedić. See also below, p. 311 & p. 315, note 1.

(a) R11922, 12012, 12036, 12482/143/92. (b) R12204, 12405/143/92.

(c) R12717, 13825/143/92.

(without General Mihailović) and the Partisans in common resistance to the Germans. If this policy succeeded—the Foreign Office were not very hopeful about the chances of success—we should have secured Yugoslav unity without either sacrificing the King or subjecting the Serbs to Communist domination.

The immediate problem on this 'middle course' would be to secure General Mihailović's dismissal without at the same time breaking up his movement. Brigadier Armstrong, who had been chief military liaison officer with General Mihailović since the middle of the year,¹ reported early in December that it would be useless for King Peter merely to dismiss General Mihailović since the General, through his control of propaganda, would represent to his followers that the King's action had been dictated by the Communists and the British. It was already clear that General Mihailović felt that we had never understood his position, or given him adequate support, and that he bitterly resented our increasingly favourable attitude to the Partisans. The Foreign Office therefore had in mind that General Mihailović might be summoned to Cairo for consultation and there dismissed.

The matter was now complicated on the British side by the visit of the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden to Cairo on their way to Teheran. While in Cairo the Prime Minister seems to have been convinced by Brigadier Maclean's arguments,² which reinforced those of Captain Deakin, that we should abandon General Mihailović and transfer our full support to the Partisans. The Prime Minister seems to have accepted at this time as adequate the evidence of General Mihailović's collaboration with the Germans. There is no adequate record of the Cairo discussions, but the conclusions reached were that we should probably have to act on these lines, even though such action would almost certainly result in the Partisans gaining control of an unwilling Serbia and in our abandoning to them the Serbs, who were the only people in Yugoslavia loyal to the King.³

¹ Colonel Bailey remained in Yugoslavia as Political Adviser to Brigadier Armstrong until January 1944.

² Brigadier Maclean was also strongly supported by the Prime Minister's son, Major Randolph Churchill. Major Churchill returned to Yugoslavia with Brigadier Maclean in January 1944.

³ There seems to have been little discussion of the Yugoslav problem at the Teheran Conference, but the Prime Minister, with President Roosevelt and Stalin, authorised a military directive to the effect that the Partisans should be given supplies and equipment to the greatest possible extent. No reference was made in this directive to supplies to General Mihailović. (For the Russian attitude after the Teheran Conference, and until October 1944, see below, Chapter XLII pp. 348-9). Earlier at the Moscow Conference Mr. Eden had made a statement on British policy with regard to Yugoslavia but there is no record of any discussion of the question at the Conference. Mr. Eden,

(continued on p. 300)

- (a) It was felt in Cairo that our case with the King would be strengthened if we could say that General Mihailović had definitely failed to carry out an operation, known to be within his powers, which we had asked him to do by a certain date. If, as we had reason to expect, he refused to undertake the operation, we could use his refusal as a good reason for breaking with him. The proposed 'test operation' consisted of two simultaneous attacks on railway lines in Serbia. This plan had been suggested by the military authorities in view of the fact that most of the evidence dealing with General Mihailović's alleged co-operation with the enemy came from secret sources and could not be published.

The Foreign Office did not approve of this plan; they thought that it could not be taken as an adequate test of the General's attitude, and that our decision must depend upon the larger political considerations. In fact, General Mihailović did not carry out the

- (b) operation within the stated time-limit; he asked for a postponement, and doubted even so whether he could do what was asked of him. At this point the Foreign Office suggested cancelling the 'test', but the military authorities considered it unlikely that the General
- (c) would attempt it. Even if he did so, we should have to say that we could not regard a 'last-minute repentance as being sufficient to outweigh Mihailović's record of two years'. Mr. Eden accepted this view. Here the matter ended, since General Mihailović did not carry out the operation.
- (d) Meanwhile the Prime Minister, while in Cairo, had told King Peter that he was much impressed with the strength and significance of the Partisan movement. He also said that we had 'irrefutable evidence' of General Mihailović's collaboration with the enemy and that in the near future we might suggest to the King the desirability of dismissing him. Later on the same day—December 10—the Prime Minister spoke in similar terms to M. Purić. M. Purić protested most strongly. He said that he could not accept the charges of collaboration, and that, if we decided to withdraw our support from General Mihailović, we should be assuming a fearful responsibility, since we should be letting loose on the country a bloodthirsty

(continued)

- (e) however, had a private conversation with M. Molotov on October 30 in which the latter said that the Soviet Government wished to send a mission to the Partisans. Mr. Eden welcomed this proposal, but suggested that they should also send a Mission to General Mihailović, since otherwise they would not be able to estimate his position. M. Molotov did not much like the idea of two missions, and hinted that he might prefer none. He asked for a base in British-controlled territory if a Mission were sent. Mr. Eden (who described M. Molotov's attitude as 'wholly co-operative') agreed. Mr. Eden and M. Molotov discussed the question again at Teheran, and, on December 14, 1943, the Soviet Government announced their intention of sending a mission to the Partisans. The mission arrived in Yugoslavia on February 23, 1944.

(a) R12701, 12861/143/92. (b) R13887/143/92. (c) R4018/92 (1944).

(d) R13053/143/92. (e) R11041/4/67.

Communist régime which the peasants of Yugoslavia would resist in a long and devastating civil war. He blamed British propaganda for the rise of the Partisans to power and maintained that we were 'muzzling' the Yugoslav Government and preventing them from talking to their own people. He did not accept Mr. Churchill's estimate of the relative strength of the two movements; he pointed out that General Mihailović had said that, as soon as Allied troops set foot in the Balkans, the whole people would rise to help them, but in the meantime he could not expose the civilian population to more German reprisals. When the Prime Minister answered that the Partisans were not deterred by threats of reprisals, M. Purić said that the Communists did not care what happened to the civilian population.

On his return from Cairo Mr. Eden was willing to recommend to (a) the War Cabinet the policy decided during the discussion, that is to say, the removal of General Mihailović from his post of Commander-in-Chief and the withdrawal of our mission if (as was expected) he did not carry out the 'test operations' by December 29. If he carried out these operations successfully, we should have to reconsider our policy. Mr. Eden proposed to inform the United States and Soviet Governments of our decision, and to say that we still thought it not impossible (i) to draw a distinction between General Mihailović on the one side, and on the other side the Cetnik movement and the Serbian people, (ii) to find another leader who would retain the loyalty of the Cetniks and also be willing to co-operate with the Partisans. We thought that the Partisans might be prepared to work with the Cetniks if General Mihailović were removed.

Sir A. Cadogan was doubtful about the practicability of this plan. He was not sure whether we could in fact find a substitute for General Mihailović or whether the King would agree to dismiss the General. He also thought it unwise to ask for the dismissal of General Mihailović until we knew whether the Partisans would come to an agreement with the King. A new and serious difficulty indeed had arisen. On November 29, 1943, the Partisans' 'Anti-Fascist Council (b) of National Defence'¹ appointed two bodies, a Supreme Legislative Committee and an Executive National Committee for the Liberation of Yugoslavia. The former of these two bodies was under the presidency of Dr. Ivan Ribar, a Croatian democrat who had formerly been Speaker of the Yugoslav Parliament;² the latter was presided over

¹ Known as Avnoj. This Council had been called by General Tito at Bihac in 1942. Most, though not all of its members were Communists. The programme officially put forward by the Council in 1942 was not Communist, but in fact Communist officials were set up in all areas under Partisan control.

² Dr. Ribar held this office in 1921 at the time of the suppression of the Yugoslav Communist Party.

(a) R13954/2/92. (b) R13359/12703/92.

by General Tito who was now given the title of 'Marshal of Yugoslavia'. This Executive Committee was described as having the powers of a temporary Government, and its members were allotted posts equivalent to those of Ministers. On the other hand the provisional character of the appointments was emphasised; the committee included non-Communists, and the Partisans made it clear that they intended to submit the question of the post-war regime to the free choice of the people of Yugoslavia after the Germans had been driven out, and that they favoured a federal constitution.

The announcement of these measures was made on December 4 in a broadcast from the 'Free Yugoslavia' radio station on Soviet territory. The Royal Yugoslav Government replied to the broadcast by a communiqué attacking not only the Partisans but the Allies for allowing the establishment of a provisional Government. Mr. Stevenson persuaded M. Purić to withdraw the communiqué, but not before it had received a considerable amount of publicity.

- (a) On December 17 another broadcast from the 'Free Yugoslavia' radio demanded political recognition for the Council as the sole and supreme Government of Yugoslavia during the war and the formal withdrawal of all rights from the Yugoslav Government in exile. The Council condemned the Government in exile and General Mihailović as traitors, and King Peter for supporting them.

- Mr. Stevenson now agreed with Sir A. Cadogan's view (put forward (b) before the second Free Yugoslav broadcast) that we could not ask the King to break with General Mihailović before he had any guarantee that he could come to an arrangement with the Partisans. Brigadier Maclean, who was still in Cairo, sent a message to Marshal Tito asking whether the broadcast was intended as a means of forcing the issue of our continued recognition of the King and his Government.

- Brigadier Maclean himself thought that the broadcast did not correspond with Marshal Tito's own views, especially with regard to the demand for the political recognition of the National Council and the personal attack on the King. On the other hand Mr. (c) Stevenson also telegraphed on December 20 that a delegation from the Partisans which had been for some time in Cairo had brought with them copies of the resolutions adopted by the National Council on November 29. One of these resolutions covered the same ground as the broadcast. It repudiated the Yugoslav Government in London and any other Government 'which in the future may be created in the country or outside the country against the will of the peoples of Yugoslavia'. The resolution held King Peter responsible

(a) R13411/143/92. (b) R13458/143/92. (c) R13467/143/92.

for the actions of General Mihailović, and stated that he was forbidden to return to the country, but that the question of the King and the monarchy would be decided by the people after their liberation.

Mr. Stevenson thought it clear that the Partisan movement was openly revolutionary. The attitude of the Serbs towards the Partisans was still doubtful, but the relative strength of the Partisans and the Cetniks made it seem inevitable that sooner or later the former would be the rulers of Yugoslavia. We had very powerful military reasons for continuing to help the Partisans against the Germans, and would find it difficult to put pressure on Marshal Tito by threatening to withdraw or curtail our assistance. On the other hand the attitude of the King and his Government was that they ignored a movement which had a firm hold over at least two-thirds of the country; they also retained General Mihailović as Minister of War.

Mr. Stevenson suggested that we should approach the United States and Soviet Governments with a view to a common policy towards Yugoslavia based on the necessity of (i) making the best use of all available means to gain a speedy victory, (ii) postponing all political issues until after the liberation of the country, (iii) unifying and concentrating resistance in Yugoslavia, and (iv) leaving the Yugoslav people to settle their affairs without foreign interference. This policy would leave the Allied High Command free to give or withhold military support, in the case of any resistance groups in Yugoslavia, according to the military situation. We should also require the Yugoslav Government to agree to the use of Yugoslav naval or commercial vessels to assist the Partisans. We should encourage the King to issue a statement that he wanted only the unity of his country in the face of the invader and that his people would be free to express their will about the future régime. We should not put any pressure on the King to change his Government, and we should tell Marshal Tito, if he forced the issue of political recognition, that the Allied Powers were unwilling to prejudge the eventual free expression of the will of the Yugoslav people.

Mr. Stevenson also telegraphed on December 20 suggestions from Brigadier Maclean for a working arrangement with the Partisans— (a) pending further decisions of policy—on the lines that (i) the Partisans should confirm their intention to allow the Yugoslav people a free choice of government after their liberation; meanwhile the question of the monarchy should not be prejudged, and the Partisans would not press for immediate formal recognition of their provisional Government; (ii) the British Government would confirm their

(a) R13469/143/92.

intention not to impose upon the Yugoslav people any form of Government not of their own free choice; (iii) the British Government would withdraw all support from General Mihailović, while continuing to give formal recognition to King Peter and the Royal Yugoslav Government; (iv) the British Government would also give all possible military support to the Partisans.

- The Foreign Office decided not to send further instructions to Mr. Stevenson and Brigadier Maclean until they knew the result of the latter's enquiry about Marshal Tito's intentions. Meanwhile they
- (a) suggested a new plan. This plan was that the King himself should go to Marshal Tito's headquarters, and in due course form a new government in Yugoslavia, obviously without General Mihailović. The Foreign Office regarded this plan as a 'gamble' but the broadcast of December 17 had not definitely excluded the possibility of an arrangement with the King, and there seemed no way—other than this direct approach—of saving the King's position.
- (b) The War Cabinet approved of this plan, but Mr. Stevenson telephoned on December 21 that he and Brigadier Maclean regarded the plan as impracticable. Brigadier Maclean's view was that it would be useless to raise the question of the monarchy with Marshal Tito, and that the broadcast merely reaffirmed his previous attitude. The Foreign Office, however, continued to think that the attempt to establish direct relations between the King and the Partisans was worth making. If it failed, we should have lost nothing. They therefore proposed to Mr. Stevenson on December 23 that Brigadier Maclean should return at once to Marshal Tito's headquarters. He should ask Marshal Tito not to make any more polemical statements, and should tell him our view that the interests of Yugoslavia and the common war effort would suffer if relations were not established between the King and the Partisans, and that the best way to establish them would be for the King to go to Yugoslavia in order to make contact with the Marshal and the Partisans. If Marshal Tito entirely rejected this suggestion, Brigadier Maclean would report his rejection, but would say nothing more to him. If Marshal Tito said that the chief obstacle to the King's return was General Mihailović, Brigadier Maclean should tell him that he would report this view to the British Government.

Mr. Stevenson was informed that, in the view of the Foreign Office, there was just a chance that, if they knew that the King would break with General Mihailović and form a new Government after making contact with the Partisans, Marshal Tito and his followers might change their attitude. It would be difficult for them to refuse to receive the King; they would also realise that an arrangement

(a) R13493/143/92. (b) WM(43) 172.2, C.A.; R13491/143/92.

with him would allow them the use of the assets—e.g. ships and men—of the Yugoslav Government in the Middle East.

Mr. Stevenson replied on the night of December 24–5 that he and (a) Brigadier Maclean were still of opinion that the proposed approach would fail. Brigadier Maclean had discussed the question of the monarchy several times with Marshal Tito and his immediate entourage. Their 'official' view was that, under the terms of the Atlantic Charter, the Yugoslav people must be left free to decide, after their liberation, upon the future régime of the country. On the other hand their personal view was that the King would not be a unifying force and that his return would be strongly opposed by the great majority of the nation. They regarded him as discredited not only by his prolonged support of General Mihailović (Brigadier Maclean considered that the General's collaboration with the enemy had long been 'common knowledge' in Yugoslavia) but also by the action taken in his name to outlaw as traitors those who were fighting to free his countrymen. The Partisans would reject with derision a suggestion that they would improve their chances and the position of their country by 'adopting' the King. Brigadier Maclean was convinced that the Foreign Office proposal would have the most unfortunate effect at a time when the military authorities attached the highest importance to the Yugoslav theatre of war and wished to maintain the closest possible relations with the Partisans.

In a second telegram on December 25 Mr. Stevenson summed up (b) his own and Brigadier Maclean's view as based on three assumptions: (i) the Partisans would be the rulers of Yugoslavia; (ii) they were of such military value to us that we should back them to the full, and thus subordinate political to military considerations; (iii) it was extremely doubtful whether we could regard the monarchy as a unifying influence in Yugoslavia. Mr. Stevenson considered that the only possible chance of an arrangement in the King's interests would be on the lines of Brigadier Maclean's proposals telegraphed on December 20.¹

Mr. Stevenson now said that the military authorities were most anxious for Brigadier Maclean to return to Yugoslavia, but they were afraid that, if he went back on any basis other than that of his plan of December 20, the effect would be to arouse suspicion and endanger the success of the projected military operations. Mr. Stevenson suggested that he and Brigadier Maclean might come to London for consultation.

The Foreign Office did not accept Brigadier Maclean's three (c) assumptions. They replied to Mr. Stevenson on the night of December

¹ See above, p. 303.

(a) R13688/143/92. (b) R13715/143/92. (c) R13688/143/92.

25-6 that, even though the chances of success were remote, we ought to try to bring the King and the Partisans together. Many of Marshal Tito's followers were loyal to the King, and were supporting the Partisans, not from political conviction but owing to their successful guerrilla activities. They might well accept a plan under which the King would sever his connexion with General Mihailović and form a government composed mainly of Partisan representatives. Brigadier Maclean had not discussed the question of the monarchy on an official basis with Marshal Tito, and indeed had not been instructed hitherto to make any proposals in the name of the British Government. There was no reason why the proposal should have the effect which Brigadier Maclean anticipated. Marshal Tito had put us in an awkward situation by his broadcast, and we were not linking the question of the monarchy with that of military support to the Partisans. On the other hand if, after Marshal Tito's provocative action, we said nothing, the Marshal would be encouraged to press his demands for the recognition of his Government. We should then be compelled either to recognise two Governments or to throw over the Royal Government; the latter course would be most unfair to the King.

- (a) Mr. Stevenson replied in the morning of December 27 that, in view of the express wish of the Foreign Office, Brigadier Maclean would go back as soon as possible with written instructions (i) to request Marshal Tito not to make any more polemical statements on the 'Free Yugoslavia' radio, and to add that we had urged the Yugoslav Government in Cairo not to issue any further statements; (ii) to represent to Marshal Tito that the interests of Yugoslavia and of the common war effort would suffer if relations were not established between the Partisans and the King, and that we should welcome an arrangement enabling the King to go to Yugoslavia for the purpose of establishing contact; (iii) to ask Marshal Tito whether he would accept such an arrangement; (iv) to give assurances that our policy was to accord the Partisans all military support
- (b) within our power. Mr. Stevenson also telegraphed on December 27 that Brigadier Maclean had received an answer from Marshal Tito to the questions which he had put to him about the broadcast of December 17. Marshal Tito said that the question regarding the King and the monarchy would be decided by the people after the war. The Partisans were not asking for an immediate and formal recognition of the National Committee as a Government; they hoped for such recognition as soon as possible since it would be of immense value in the struggle for national liberation. Propaganda against the King was 'not important' if the King himself ceased to support the

(a) R13730/143/92. (b) R13732/143/92.

'reactionary forces working with the enemy against the people' in Yugoslavia and abroad. On the other hand the copy of the resolutions of November 29 brought to Cairo by the Partisans was correct, as it included a stipulation that the King should not go back to Yugoslavia before the nation had expressed a decision with regard to the post-war régime.

In his telegram of December 27 Mr. Stevenson hoped that we should not postpone any longer the question of getting rid of General Mihailović. Here again there was a new complication. General Mihailović had told Brigadier Armstrong on December 23 that he (a) was willing to stop fighting the Partisans and to attack the enemy. He also asked that a meeting should be arranged between representatives of his own and Marshal Tito's forces, with British representatives as intermediaries, and with a British guarantee for any settlement which might be reached.

The Foreign Office inclined to agree with Mr. Stevenson's view that this offer had come too late and that it was only a move on General Mihailović's part to try to get us to continue our support. Mr. Eden therefore telegraphed to Mr. Stevenson on December 28 that he was prepared to recommend to the War Cabinet the immediate cessation of all supplies to General Mihailović,¹ and to inform the Yugoslav Government accordingly, if it were a fact that we had conclusive documentary evidence showing approval by the General of collaboration first with the Italians and then with the Germans. As yet the Foreign Office had received no such conclusive evidence.² Mr. Eden said that an approach to the King to get rid of General Mihailović might best be decided when we knew whether Marshal Tito would collaborate with the King after the latter had dismissed the General. Mr. Eden told Mr. Stevenson that he regarded General Mihailović's offer to negotiate with Marshal Tito as too late, and that the antagonism between the two leaders was now so deep-rooted that even to let Marshal Tito know of the offer would arouse his suspicions and possibly wreck the prospects of our plan to bring him and the King together. We should therefore tell General Mihailović that we did not see our way to acting as an intermediary between him and Marshal Tito, but that there was nothing to prevent him from making a direct approach to the Marshal.

¹ In fact, practically no supplies (other than those required by the British liaison officers) had been sent to General Mihailović since November. No communication was made to him about the decision not to send any more supplies.

² See above, p. 298, note 1.

(a) R13731/143/92.

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(iv)

Further British attempts to secure collaboration between the Partisan movement and King Peter: differences of view between the Foreign Office and the Prime Minister: the Prime Minister's correspondence with Marshal Tito (December 27, 1943–March 10, 1944).

- During this time the Prime Minister was away from London but Mr. Eden had kept him in touch with the discussions over the
- (a) Yugoslav question. On December 26 Mr. Churchill had telegraphed his agreement with the proposed instructions to Brigadier Maclean. From this point he took a different tactical line. He agreed with the general aims of the Foreign Office, and with their view that we did not want either civil war or a Communist régime in Yugoslavia after the war, and that we could not throw over the King and repudiate him and his Government. He differed from the Foreign Office in accepting, without qualification, Brigadier Maclean's estimate of the Partisans and their prospects, and in thinking that we should withdraw our missions with General Mihailović before we had an assurance that Marshal Tito would come to an arrangement with the King.
- (b) The Prime Minister telegraphed to Mr. Eden on December 27 that he had received a short message from Marshal Tito wishing him a rapid and complete recovery from his illness. The Prime Minister sent to Mr. Eden the terms of the reply which he proposed to make. In this reply he used the words: 'I am resolved that we shall have no further dealings with Mihailović and have asked the Royal Yugoslav Government to dismiss him from their Counsels.' He then went on to explain that we could not honourably break with the King, and must remain in official relations with him and his Government while at the same time giving Marshal Tito all possible military support. He added: 'I hope . . . that there may be an end to the polemics on either side once Mihailović has been turned out as he richly deserves to be.'
- (c) Mr. Eden telegraphed to the Prime Minister on December 29 that he agreed with his plan to send a reply to Marshal Tito but that the reply should suggest to the Marshal that he should 'come together with the King'. Mr. Eden therefore proposed the inclusion of words to this effect. 'What would you think of his joining you in Yugoslavia and setting up a new Yugoslav Government representing all the elements of genuine resistance?' Mr. Eden maintained the Prime Minister's reservation that after their liberation the

(a) Tel. Frozen 907 (Churchill Papers/511; R13491/143/92.)

(b) Frozen 933 (Churchill Papers/511; R133/8/92).

(c) Tel. Grand 889 (Churchill Papers/511; R133/8/92).

Yugoslav people would be free to choose their own Government; he wanted to add 'until that time King Peter's position should not be called in question'. Mr. Eden also thought it unwise to tell Marshal Tito now that we would have no more dealings with General Mihailović. We had not—at least in London—any conclusive evidence of his misbehaviour; in any case it was tactically better to hold back our decision, and to make it as a concession to Marshal Tito if he were prepared to discuss working with the King.

This telegram crossed another telegram from the Prime Minister (a) to the effect that, according to Major Churchill, Brigadier Maclean was sure that no *quid pro quo* could be obtained for the King from Marshal Tito by the dismissal of General Mihailović, but that the latter's dismissal might 'create an atmosphere in which the King's fortunes could be advanced'. Major Churchill agreed with this view, and had told the Prime Minister that he regarded as necessary the immediate repudiation of General Mihailović by the British Government, and, if possible, by King Peter, and the immediate return to Yugoslavia of Brigadier Maclean (who was at Bari)¹ to obtain the maximum military and political advantage from the situation. The Prime Minister thought that Major Churchill's advice was sound. On December 30 the Prime Minister, who had now received Mr. Eden's telegram, repeated his opinion, and refused Mr. Eden's suggested changes in his message to Marshal (b) Tito. He asked whether Mr. Eden agreed that the message should go in its original form or whether he (the Prime Minister) should merely send a friendly acknowledgement.

Mr. Eden replied on January 1 that he had regarded the Prime (c) Minister's message as offering a good opportunity to put to Marshal Tito the proposal that the King should join him in Yugoslavia and there set up a new Government. Mr. Eden would not press the proposal if the Prime Minister did not wish to make it. He thought, however, that it would be a mistake to promise Marshal Tito that we would 'break' General Mihailović, not merely by cutting off his supplies but by forcing King Peter to dismiss him. Mr. Eden pointed out that Marshal Tito would regard such a promise as a sign of weakness on our part and that we could not be sure that King Peter would dismiss General Mihailović unless we were able to offer something in return in the way of collaboration. Otherwise the King would say that we were depriving him of his last link with his country. Furthermore, if we had a public and spectacular

¹ Brigadier Maclean was waiting in Bari to be parachuted into Yugoslavia. He arrived in Yugoslavia on January 20.

(a) Frozen 976 (Churchill Papers/511; R213/8/92).

(b) Frozen 996 (Churchill Papers/511; R214/8/92).

(c) Grand 981 (Churchill Papers/511; R214/8/92).

breach with General Mihailović our case against him should be unanswerable, but we were still without sufficient evidence, and might be represented as sacrificing the General in order to please the Russians. German propaganda would have considerable success in the Balkans and Turkey in making General Mihailović the champion of Balkan independence as opposed to our policy of 'selling the Balkans to Russia'.

- (a) On January 2 the Prime Minister replied that he had already told King Peter that we should probably advise him to dismiss General Mihailović, since we regarded this action as offering the best chance of getting the King back to Yugoslavia. The King had not seemed worried about our decision. The Prime Minister repeated to Mr. Eden that he had no doubt about General Mihailović's collaboration with the enemy.¹ He was, however, willing to make certain modifications in his message. The message as finally sent
- (b) did not include a suggestion that King Peter should go to Yugoslavia, but the reference to General Mihailović was modified to read: 'I am resolved that the British Government shall give no further military support to Mihailović... and we should be glad if the Royal Yugoslavian Government would dismiss him from their counsels.'
- (c) The Prime Minister's message was taken to Marshal Tito by Brigadier Maclean. Brigadier Maclean asked the Prime Minister to allow him to use his own discretion about the timing of the request which he had been instructed to make to Marshal Tito with regard
- (d) to the return of the King. Meanwhile Mr. Churchill sent to Mr. Eden the draft of a letter which he proposed to send to King Peter strongly advising him to dismiss General Mihailović.
- (e) The War Cabinet discussed this draft on January 11. They considered that it would become necessary to send a letter on these lines to King Peter, but that they would prefer to wait until they had received a report from Brigadier Maclean on Marshal Tito's reaction to the Prime Minister's letter. Mr. Eden subsequently
- (f) explained to the Prime Minister that Marshal Tito might be willing to discuss collaboration with the King or might refuse to allow him into the country until the Yugoslav people had pronounced on their future régime. In the latter case—i.e. refusal of collaboration—it might be desirable to modify the terms of the Prime Minister's letter, since the letter suggested that the dismissal of General

¹ The Prime Minister did not produce any new evidence to meet Mr. Eden's doubts.

(a) Frozen 1058 (Churchill Papers/511; R216/8/92).

(b) Frozen 1057 (Churchill Papers/511; R411/8/92).

(c) Frozen 1187 (Churchill Papers/511; R700/8/92). (d) Frozen 1184 (Churchill Papers/511; R700/8/92). (e) WM(44) 5.2, C.A.; WP(44) 19; R739/8/92. (f) Grand 1303 (Churchill Papers/511; R700/8/92).

Mihailović would improve the prospects of the King's return to (a) Yugoslavia. The Prime Minister telegraphed on January 12 that he agreed with the course proposed by the War Cabinet.

The Foreign Office received on January 12 a full report from (b) S.O.E. in Cairo on the evidence against General Mihailović. The case was that certain of General Mihailović's commanders had collaborated with the Italians or Germans—or both—and that the General himself had condoned and in some cases approved their action. There was also evidence that in March 1943, General Mihailović had directed operations in the Neretva valley against the Partisans in collaboration with the Axis offensive against them. In all cases this action appeared to have been taken against other Yugoslavs (Croats or Partisans) and the collaboration with the enemy had not been directed against us but had been accepted as a means of fighting what was in fact a civil war *à l'outrance* in Yugoslavia.¹

For the moment, however, the problem was how to get rid of General Mihailović without giving Marshal Tito, indirectly, a complete victory in this civil war. In the view of the Foreign Office the Prime Minister's attitude added to the difficulties of the situation. The fact that Marshal Tito had now entered into direct correspondence with the head of an Allied Government increased his status with his followers, and gave a new importance to his movement. Moreover, Brigadier Maclean now had the Prime Minister's permission to delay raising the question of King Peter's return, and Marshal Tito was unlikely to suggest it. In these circumstances we should have nothing to offer King Peter in return for his abandonment of the only elements in Yugoslavia which remained loyal to him. Mr. Eden therefore suggested to the Prime Minister, on the latter's (c) return to London, that we should instruct Brigadier Maclean without further delay to tell Marshal Tito that, if he would agree to discuss collaboration with the King, we would tell the King that he must dismiss General Mihailović. Mr. Eden failed to convince the Prime Minister. He sent him a minute on January 19 repeating the argument that if we pressed for the dismissal of General Mihailović without any undertaking on the part of Marshal Tito, we should really be abandoning the King.

¹ For a further reference to the evidence against General Mihailović, see below, p. 315, note 1. General Sir H. Maitland Wilson, whom the Prime Minister advised Mr. Eden to consult, was opposed to a complete and open breach with General Mihailović. General Wilson thought that the Cetniks at least were holding down two Bulgarian divisions. The phrase 'no further military support', instead of 'shall have no further dealings' with Mihailović which was accepted by the Prime Minister as an amendment to his letter to Marshal Tito, was suggested by General Wilson.

(a) Frozen 1244 (Churchill Papers/511; R700/8/92). (b) R656/8/92.
(c) R1114, 1115/8/92.

- (a) On January 26 Brigadier Maclean telegraphed to Mr. Stevenson in Cairo that Marshal Tito and the Partisans in general were extremely friendly, and were showing a greatly increased appreciation of the help we were giving them. On the other hand their attitude towards King Peter, the Yugoslav Government and General Mihailović was becoming harder. Brigadier Maclean suggested that he should be authorised to address an enquiry in writing to Marshal Tito whether he would be prepared to 'enter into contact with [the King] with a view to the common prosecution of the war'. Brigadier Maclean advised that, if possible, the enquiry should be made in the name of the British, Soviet and United States Governments. The Prime Minister was still of the opinion that it would be better for King Peter to dismiss General Mihailović
- (b) before an enquiry was addressed to Marshal Tito, but he agreed on January 30 that Brigadier Maclean should carry out his suggestion, though without waiting for consultation with the Russians and Americans.¹
- (c) On the following day Mr. Stevenson reported from Brigadier Maclean Marshal Tito's answer to the Prime Minister's message.² The answer was friendly but non-committal, and, as the Foreign Office had expected, did not raise the issue of the King's return. Marshal Tito said that he understood our engagements towards the King and his Government, and that, as far as the interests of the Yugoslav peoples allowed, he would try to avoid unnecessary politics³ and inconvenience to the Allies. Nevertheless he claimed that the internal political situation represented the 'irresistible desire of all patriots'. Marshal Tito and the supporters of his movement (in his own words, 'the enormous majority of the peoples of Yugoslavia') were trying to secure unity in the struggle against the invader, and to 'create conditions for the establishment of a State in which all nations of Yugoslavia would feel happy, and that is a truly democratic Yugoslavia, a federative Yugoslavia'.
- (d) In view of this answer Mr. Eden thought that, if there were a favourable response on Marshal Tito's part to Brigadier Maclean's letter, we should authorise him to follow it up by a hint that King Peter should be encouraged to go to Yugoslavia and set up a new Government there. The Prime Minister, however, decided to send a personal telegram to Marshal Tito. This telegram was sent on the
- (e) night of February 5-6. The Prime Minister said that he understood

¹ Mr. Eden thought that there would be further delay if we tried to bring in the Russians and the Americans.

² The text was very corrupt and Mr. Stevenson had to ask for a repetition.

³ Another—and more likely—reading of this word was 'polemics'.

(a) R1501/8/92. (b) PMM46/4, R1508/8/92. (c) R1644, 1830/8/92. (d) R1508/8/92. (e) T218/4 (Churchill Papers/511; R2146/8/92).

the position of reserve which Marshal Tito had taken towards King Peter. He repeated that he had been in favour for several months past of asking the King to dismiss General Mihailović and to face the consequent resignation of his Government. The Prime Minister had not taken this step because it would have meant advising the King—for whom he felt a personal responsibility—to break with his only supporters. The Prime Minister therefore asked Marshal Tito directly whether the dismissal of General Mihailović would pave the way for friendly relations with the Marshal and his Movement, and make it possible, later on, for the King to join Marshal Tito in the field, on the understanding that the future of the monarchy would not be decided until after the liberation of the country.

The Prime Minister then used the arguments which the Foreign Office had wished Brigadier Maclean to put to Marshal Tito. He pointed out that a working arrangement with the King would consolidate many forces, especially in Serbia, now estranged from the Partisans, and would give the Movement additional authority and resources. Yugoslavia would then be able 'to speak with a united voice in the councils of the Allies during this formative period when so much is in flux'.¹

A reply was received from Marshal Tito on February 15. The (a) reply was dated February 10, but (as with the previous message) was delayed in Cairo because important sections of it were indecipherable and had to be repeated. Meanwhile on the night of February 9–10 Mr. Stevenson telegraphed from Cairo a message from the Commander-in-Chief, Middle East, to General Wilson proposing the (b) immediate withdrawal of the British missions² attached to General Mihailović. The main reasons put forward for this request were that (i) Allied Missions with the Partisans were essential to a full military effort, but Marshal Tito was unwilling to accept them in Serbia until we had withdrawn the missions to General Mihailović; (ii) our decision to cut off supplies to the latter put an increasingly severe strain on the relations between his commanders and our missions.

The Foreign Office inclined to think that it would be better to wait for Marshal Tito's reply to the Prime Minister before withdrawing the mission. The Prime Minister, however, thought that

¹ The Prime Minister went on to discuss in the telegram military measures which he had proposed for the assistance of the Partisans.

² The missions consisted of 26 officers and 27 other ranks. The term here included what were otherwise described as 'sub-missions', i.e. liaison officers or wireless operators attached not to headquarters but to special units. Marshal Tito would not accept these sub-missions in Serbia unless the sub-missions to General Mihailović had been withdrawn.

(a) R2435/8/92; Churchill Papers/511. (b) R2197, 2411/8/92.

instructions should be sent for immediate withdrawal. Mr. Eden gave way to the Prime Minister's view, and telegraphed to Mr. Stevenson on February 17 that the missions should be withdrawn. Marshal Tito's reply was received before any action had begun.

- (a) The reply laid down certain conditions for co-operation: (i) the Yugoslav Government in Cairo, and General Mihailović, should be suppressed; the Government must also account to the Anti-Fascist National Council of Liberation for the 'enormous sums of the nation's money' which it had squandered; (ii) the Allies must acknowledge the National Council of Liberation as the sole Government of Yugoslavia, and King Peter must accept the laws of this Government. If the King agreed to these conditions, the National Council would not refuse to co-operate with him on the understanding that the question of the future of the monarchy was left for decision until after the liberation of Yugoslavia, and that the King made a declaration to this effect.

Marshal Tito stated that these conditions had been laid down in view of the fact that a special arrangement with King Peter during the war would have an effect contrary to the intentions of the British Government, since it would provoke 'serious anxiety and suspicion' among patriots in all parts of Yugoslavia, and especially in Croatia, Slovenia, and Macedonia. Marshal Tito told Brigadier Maclean that if King Peter would accept the conditions he would send a representative to discuss future co-operation. When Brigadier Maclean raised the question of the King's return to Yugoslavia, Marshal Tito said that this return could be arranged only if the Yugoslav Government (i.e. the National Council) repealed their resolution of November 29.¹ The King was discredited in the eyes of his people owing to his long association with General Mihailović and the Government in Cairo.

- (b) Brigadier Maclean telegraphed his own view that we should advise King Peter to accept the conditions since, although they offered no guarantee for the future of the monarchy, they represented the King's sole chance of continuing to reign. The Foreign Office—and Mr. Stevenson—did not agree with Brigadier Maclean. They still hesitated to take the responsibility of advising the King to agree to Marshal Tito's demands, which meant the imposition of the Partisan Government upon the whole of Serbia, in return for nothing more than an offer to discuss co-operation.

The Foreign Office did not condone the behaviour of General Mihailović, and particularly of some of his commanders, in co-operating with the Axis forces and refusing to undertake operations

¹ See above, pp. 302 and 307.

(a) R2435, 2409, 2410/8/92. (b) R2409, 2410/8/92.

against the Germans. Their motive, however, in collaboration was to keep Serbia free from the Communists (i.e. the Partisans), and as they were much fewer in numbers than the Partisans they could hardly succeed without some measure of collaboration with the Axis forces.¹

Marshal Tito had shown in his telegrams that his main preoccupation (like that of E.A.M. in Greece) was to impose his Government upon the whole country. Marshal Tito was indeed fighting the Germans as well as the Cetniks (whereas E.A.M. was only fighting other Greeks). We had therefore to give Marshal Tito military support, but we had no reason for believing that the majority of the population of the country wanted either his Government or his politics.

The Foreign Office thought that in the circumstances we should not yet compel King Peter to dismiss General Mihailović—the real question at issue was not the General's personality but his policy—and that we should ask the King whether we should not try to get more reasonable terms from Marshal Tito. In any case we ought not to accept Marshall Tito's reply as final, but only as a first move in a process of bargaining.

Before receiving the views of the Foreign Office, the Prime Minister (a) sent Mr. Eden a minute to the effect that as soon as our Missions had been withdrawn we ought to advise King Peter to dismiss General Mihailović and take the consequences. Mr. Churchill remained sure that this plan was the sole means of saving the monarchy. He suggested a draft reply from himself to Marshal Tito in which he asked for an assurance that, after the King had freed himself from General Mihailović and 'other bad advisers', he would be invited to join his countrymen in the field, on the understanding that the future of the monarchy remained an open question.

The Prime Minister's minute was dated February 16. Mr. Eden replied on February 20 that, in fact, Marshal Tito had already rejected the Prime Minister's proposal that the dismissal of General

¹ In September 1944, the Foreign Office received from the United States Office of Strategic Services a collection of fifty-three captured Cetnik documents dating from July 1942 to April 1943. The documents originated from Cetnik units operating in Croatia, Bosnia, Dalmatia or elsewhere, but not in Serbia. They provided conclusive evidence that local commanders in these areas were in continual contact with German, Italian, and Croatian State forces. Although they seemed to regard themselves as followers of General Mihailović, and to be acting with his approval, these commanders did not appear to have operated directly under his command. The general impression left by these documents confirmed the view stated above that General Mihailović's collaboration with the Axis was determined—and limited—by his conception that his first duty was to prevent a Communist control of Yugoslavia after the war. (b)

(a) R2571/8/92. (b) R16620/11/92.

Mihailović should pave the way for friendly relations with King Peter and, later, for the King's return. Marshal Tito had said that 'a special arrangement' with the King during the war would not have the effect which we desired. It was therefore doubtful whether the King could accept Marshal Tito's conditions, which included the imposition of the Partisan Government on a probably unwilling Serbia, without some firmer assurance of support and co-operation on the Marshal's side. Mr. Eden therefore proposed changes in the Prime Minister's reply. He suggested that, instead of saying 'after' the dismissal of General Mihailović, the Prime Minister should say 'if the King frees himself', etc., and that he should repeat the argument that he could not press the King to dismiss General Mihailović, throw over his Government, and cut himself off from all contact with Serbia before knowing whether he could count on Marshal Tito's support and co-operation.

The Foreign Office also suggested a new paragraph pointing out that Marshal Tito's condition that the Allies should recognise his National Council as the sole Yugoslav Government raised difficulties, since it conflicted with our rule that the Yugoslav people should choose their own Government as soon as conditions permitted a free expression of their choice. Until free elections could be held in Yugoslavia, we had to work for a Provisional Government including all the elements opposed to the existing German domination. We should be only too glad to recognise such a Government as the successor of the Yugoslav Government in Cairo.

The Prime Minister doubted the expediency of the last paragraph. The Foreign Office agreed to cut it out, and to send it privately to Brigadier Maclean with authority to use it if and when he thought fit. Otherwise the message was telegraphed on February (a) 26 with a final paragraph hoping that Marshal Tito would be able to modify his demands and thus enable the Prime Minister to work with him for the unification of Yugoslavia against the common enemy.¹ The Prime Minister, at the suggestion of Mr. Eden, also added that he had proposed that King Peter should return to London from Cairo for discussion.²

¹ On February 22, 1944, Mr. Churchill made a statement in Parliament on the position in Yugoslavia, Greece and Poland. He showed the draft of his statement to Mr. Eden. Mr. Eden suggested that he should be less strong in his praise of Marshal Tito, since we did not wish to give the latter the impression that we were already so much pleased with him that he need make no concessions in regard to co-operation with King Peter. Mr. Eden also thought it unnecessary to say anything about General Mihailović, or at all events that the reference to his collaboration with the enemy should be made in guarded terms since nearly all our evidence came from secret sources which we could not use in discussion. For the Prime Minister's speech, see *Parl. Deb., 5th Ser. H. of C.*, Vol. 397, cols. 692-9. The Prime Minister, in fact, referred to the collaboration of some of General Mihailović's commanders with the enemy.

² The King at this time wished to return to England from Cairo for his wedding to Princess Alexandra of Greece. There were considerable political objections to this

(continued on p. 317)

(a) T402/4 (Churchill Papers/511; R 3261/8/92).

On March 3 Mr. Stevenson reported a message from Brigadier (a) Maclean in which he asked that, before speaking to Marshal Tito about a 'Provisional Government', he should be told (a) what new elements we wished to see in the Government, and (b) whether, after the inclusion of these new elements, we would recognise the National Council as a Provisional Government. Brigadier Maclean also wanted to know the exact meaning of the Prime Minister's phrase about Marshal Tito's 'modifying his demands'.

A reply was sent to Brigadier Maclean on March 9. The reply was drawn up in the Foreign Office and approved by the Prime Minister. The answer to Brigadier Maclean's questions was that we wanted Marshal Tito to agree to the return of King Peter to Yugoslavia where he would form a new Government under the presidency of Marshal Tito. The new Government would doubtless consist mainly of members of the National Council but should include representatives of all other Yugoslav groups opposed to the Germans. In present conditions such representatives might have to be looked for outside Yugoslavia. The composition of the new Government must be acceptable to King Peter as well as to Marshal Tito if there were to be collaboration between them. We should accept a Government thus formed as the legitimate successor of the present Government, and would regard it as provisional only in the sense that the Yugoslav people would have a right to settle their own Government by free election after the war. King Peter could probably best satisfy Marshal Tito by issuing a proclamation to this effect when he announced the new Government.

On March 10 a message reached London from Brigadier Maclean (b) to the effect that he had delivered the Prime Minister's message to Marshal Tito and had been promised an early reply. Marshal Tito seemed to favour the idea of inviting King Peter to join the new Partisan training squadron which was to be formed with the assistance of the Royal Air Force.

The Foreign Office realised at once that this latter proposal would not meet the situation, and that, in fact, it meant keeping the King indefinitely out of Yugoslavia. They therefore proposed sending a telegram to Brigadier Maclean telling him that the idea was not a good one. A draft was prepared but was not sent off at once owing to other developments in London.

(continued)

marriage, but the British Government held the view that the King's marriage would in fact have little influence either way on the prospects of his return to Yugoslavia. The King came back to England about the middle of March, and the marriage took place shortly after his return.

(a) R3494/8/92. (b) R4249/8/92.

(v)

Marshal Tito's refusal to co-operate with King Peter: British attempts to persuade King Peter to form a new Government (March 14–April 30, 1944).

- (a) Mr. Eden had suggested on March 14 that the Prime Minister should see King Peter and recapitulate the reasons why we had ceased to support General Mihailović and why we considered it essential that the King should dismiss his Government. The Prime Minister called a meeting on March 14 with Mr. Eden and Foreign Office representatives to discuss the whole question of the advice to be given to the King. Mr. Stevenson and Colonel Bailey, who had been with General Mihailović in Yugoslavia, also attended the meeting.
- (b) At this meeting it was agreed that there was no chance of securing collaboration between Marshal Tito and King Peter and his Serb followers until the King had dismissed his Government. There need be no haste about forming a new Government; a delay of two or three weeks would enable us to ascertain Marshal Tito's views on the subject. The dismissal of the Government would mean that General Mihailović would cease to be Minister of War. The question whether he should continue as Commander-in-Chief was more difficult. He controlled considerable forces and had a strong position in Serbia. It would not therefore be easy to remove him without causing trouble in Serbia.

A suggestion was made at the meeting that the King might dismiss General Mihailović and send in someone to take his place. Colonel Bailey thought that this plan would not succeed because General Mihailović would probably refuse to obey the King's instructions and would make his successor, in fact, a prisoner. Moreover, Allied propaganda could reach the Serbs only through General Mihailović's organisation, and the General would see to it that anything damaging to his position was withheld.

It was then suggested that the dissident officers in General Mihailović's forces—i.e. those who were known to disapprove of his policy—should be encouraged to stage a 'palace revolution' and dismiss him. If this plan were accepted, our liaison officers would have to put it to the officers concerned before they (the liaison officers) left General Mihailović's headquarters.

After further discussion the Prime Minister said that the Yugoslav problem was one that could be solved only by stages. He thought that Mr. Eden should see King Peter on the following day and advise him to dismiss his Government. The King need not be pressed to

(a) R4147/8/92. (b) R4550/44/92.

form a new Government in a hurry, and should be told in the first instance merely to reflect upon our advice and to come back for further discussion in a few days. If and when the King decided to dismiss his Government, the Prime Minister would inform Marshal Tito of the fact, give him the names of those we had in mind for inclusion in a new Government and ask if he were prepared to collaborate with them on military matters. If Marshal Tito refused collaboration, we should have to say that, although he could count on our military support, we should be unable to sever our contact with King Peter and the Serbs.

The Prime Minister's proposal was accepted. It was hoped that, before any message was sent to Marshal Tito, the Marshal would have replied to the Prime Minister's telegram of February 26. Meanwhile no steps would be taken with regard to promoting a 'palace revolution' until we knew more of Marshal Tito's views. We should, however, ask our liaison officers whether they thought that this plan would have any chance of success.

Mr. Eden therefore saw King Peter on March 15. The King seemed willing to dismiss his Government, but said that he would find it very difficult to form another Government. Mr. Eden said that we hoped for a Government of men more representative of Yugoslavia as a whole and ready to come to some sort of working agreement with Marshal Tito. The King thought that there would be some advantage in dropping General Mihailović as Minister of War; he defended the General up to a point but agreed that it would be hard to get unity as long as he remained Commander-in-Chief. The King appeared to think that there would be no trouble about dismissing him from this post and nominating someone to take over.

Mr. Eden described the King's attitude as sensible throughout the conversation. The King agreed to reflect on our advice. He did not object to a few week's delay before forming a new Government, but suggested that a long interregnum would be difficult. In any case he would not take a decision until after his wedding. Mr. Eden, in reporting on the conversation to the Prime Minister, considered that we might have difficulties in persuading the King to include in a new Government the men whom we wanted in it.

Meanwhile during the night of March 13-14 another message (a) from Brigadier Maclean reached London. Brigadier Maclean said that Marshal Tito would have his answer to the Prime Minister ready in three or four days' time. He had told Marshal Tito that Mr. Eden wanted to know whether he could consider extending the basis of his Government to include representatives at present outside

(a) R4250/8/92.

Yugoslavia. Marshal Tito was willing to accept 'suitable candidates' but would have nothing to do with anyone who had shown himself hostile to the Partisan Movement and ready to collaborate with the enemy.

A second part of Brigadier Maclean's message was received on the morning of March 15. Brigadier Maclean had asked Marshal Tito whether he would agree to the return of the King to Yugoslavia, and what political rôle he had in mind for him. Marshal Tito said that he would give his considered reply, after consulting his Government, in his message to the Prime Minister, but that the King was precluded from returning to Yugoslavia by the decision of the National Council. Marshal Tito was not prepared to override this decision, and the Council, which alone could repeal it, could not be convened for the present. Marshal Tito repeated his suggestion that the King should join the Partisan training squadron as a pilot. The King's long connexion with the Purić Government and General Mihailović had discredited him. Hence it would be some time before the Partisans accepted the idea of reconciliation and co-operation.

The Foreign Office regarded this message from Brigadier Maclean as most unsatisfactory. Mr. Eden now submitted to the Prime Minister a draft telegram to Brigadier Maclean pointing out the implications of the proposal that the King should join the Partisan air squadron, and also telling him that he had described wrongly Mr. Eden's enquiry about a more broadly based Yugoslav Government. Brigadier Maclean had asked Marshal Tito whether he would 'extend the basis of his Government', whereas Mr. Eden's proposal was not that the Marshal should strengthen his existing committee, but that King Peter should create a new Government in Yugoslavia with which Marshal Tito should be associated. Mr. Eden hoped that Brigadier Maclean had made this point clear, and also that he would be able to persuade Marshal Tito to make a more acceptable offer about the King.

- (a) The Prime Minister replied in a minute of March 16 that he agreed with Mr. Eden's draft. He also wished to send a personal message to Marshal Tito informing him that we had recalled our liaison officers from General Mihailović and had advised King Peter to dismiss M. Purić and his Government. The liaison officers were now on their way to the coast. The King had accepted our advice as that of a friendly Ally resolved on maintaining relations with him. The fall of the Government involved the dismissal of General Mihailović from his office as Minister of War. The King would now have to provide himself with a new Government. Several personalities would come under consideration; some of them were understood

(a) R4249/8/92.

to be agreeable to Marshal Tito. Mr. Churchill therefore wanted to know 'what you think would be most helpful to our common aims'. These aims were 'first and above all, the gathering together of all Yugoslav forces in order to rid their country of the foreign invader, and, secondly, the setting up on sure foundations of a free, independent, and united Yugoslav State under whatever form of Government its people may choose'.

The Foreign Office considered that the Prime Minister's draft needed two important modifications. We could not say that our officers were on their way to the coast because they had not yet started;¹ we could not tell Marshal Tito that King Peter had accepted our advice with regard to the dismissal of his Ministers until we knew for certain that the King intended to dismiss them.

The Prime Minister saw King Peter on March 18. The King said (a) he was prepared to dismiss his Ministers, but asked Mr. Churchill not to send his proposed message to Marshal Tito until March 21, since he (the King) would take action on this day. The message was therefore held up. The Prime Minister agreed, however, that Mr. Eden's draft instructions to Brigadier Maclean should be despatched. The telegram was sent on March 19 in the form of a message from the Prime Minister. The Foreign Office regarded the delay as unfortunate, since, in view of his strong opinions on the subject, they did not expect Brigadier Maclean to have done much to influence Marshal Tito to be more forthcoming about the King. They now anticipated a completely negative answer from Marshal Tito. In such case we should have to consider whether we should press the King against his will to appoint a new Government composed of men who were prepared to collaborate with Marshal Tito or whether we should put more pressure on the Marshal. It thus seemed undesirable that the Prime Minister should send his conciliatory telegram until he had received Marshal Tito's promised reply.

On March 21 Mr. Eden wrote another minute to the Prime Minister pointing out that, if the King now dismissed his Ministers, and did not nominate a new Government for several weeks, Marshal Tito might declare in the interval that his Committee was the legitimate Government of Yugoslavia; the Russians might recognise it as such² and the King's position would then be worse than ever. Mr. Eden suggested that the statement announcing the resignation of M. Purić's Government should include the fact that the King

¹ The British missions did not leave until the end of May. General Mihailović was obstructive and dilatory in making arrangements for their withdrawal; there was also no way out for them except through areas controlled by the Partisans, and this way was not considered safe. Finally the missions were withdrawn by air.

² There had been hints in the Russian press of such recognition.
(a) R4250, 4533, 4249/8/92.

had called on someone to form a new administration. Mr. Eden thought that we ought to discuss with the King the composition of a new Ministry and advise him to delay the dismissal of his present ministers until his plans were ready. This course would also have the advantage that we should probably have heard meanwhile Marshal Tito's answer to the Prime Minister's message of February 26.

- (a) Brigadier Maclean telegraphed on March 20 that Marshal Tito understood our wish that King Peter should form an entirely new Government in Yugoslavia with which the Marshal would be associated, and that his reply to the Prime Minister would be ready 'shortly'. The reply was not sent until March 27, and did not reach the Foreign Office until March 29.¹ As the Foreign Office had expected, Marshal Tito's answer about the King was wholly unsatisfactory. He said, on behalf of the National Committee, that he could not accept the proposal for the King's return in disregard of the decision of November 29. He repeated his suggestion that the King should 'make amends' for the wrong he had done to his country by joining the Partisan air squadron.

Mr. Eden held a meeting in the Foreign Office on March 30 to discuss the next step. He submitted the conclusions to the Prime Minister in a minute of March 31. He said that it was useless to try again with Marshal Tito at present, and that the best we could do for the King would be to ensure that he put himself right in the eyes of the world. The King should raise himself above the internal dissensions of his country by making a declaration that his only desire was to unite his people against the invader, that all internal issues should be postponed until after the enemy had been driven out, and that his people must then have an opportunity to express their will freely in regard to their future régime and that he would accept their decision. The King should also form an administration which would accept the policy laid down in the declaration and be willing to collaborate with all Yugoslavs, regardless of their political colour, who were actively resisting the enemy.

The King's Government had been completely unconstructive both in internal and external affairs, and by their attitude towards Marshal Tito had widened the breach in the Yugoslav ranks. We should advise him to form a new Government, not as part of a bargain with Marshal Tito, but in order to improve his own position. The personnel available was very indifferent, and the choice lay between a reshuffle of the Yugoslav politicians in exile

(c) ¹ On the previous day the Prime Minister had told Mr. Eden that we ought to settle the question of the King's new Ministers without delay.

(a) R4534/8/92. (b) R4963, 5021/8/92; T679-80/4, Churchill Papers/511. (c) PMM 319/4, R4963/8/92.

who had hitherto failed to agree among themselves, and a much smaller administration consisting of men such as M. Subasić, the Ban of Croatia.¹ Mr. Eden favoured the latter course if it were possible. The King would thus dismiss General Mihailović from the Ministry of War, but would leave him as Commander-in-Chief. We had heard from Brigadier Armstrong that a 'palace revolution' would not be feasible because there were no officers at General Mihailović's headquarters capable of carrying it out. With a new Government in power, however, it might be possible later on for the King to replace General Mihailović by another Commander-in-Chief.

The Prime Minister, in a minute of April 1, agreed generally with (a) Mr. Eden. He thought that the King should be 'pressed to the utmost limit to get rid of his present fatal millstone advisers'. There was now no possibility of a bargain. The Prime Minister regretted that he had agreed to the request to Marshal Tito that the King should create a new Government 'in Yugoslavia' with which Marshal Tito would be associated. The Prime Minister's idea throughout had been that the King should dissociate himself from General Mihailović, and accept the resignation of the 'bedraggled' Purić Government or dismiss them; it would not matter much if he remained without a Government for a few weeks. Mr. Churchill agreed now that, in view of the arrival of a 'grandiose' Russian mission at Marshal Tito's headquarters, and of the 'new Russian hostility to us'² a 'stop-gap' Government was necessary.

The main point was still that the King should act quickly. Mr. Churchill had little doubt that the Russians 'will drive straight ahead for a Communist Tito-governed Yugoslavia, and will denounce everything done to the contrary as undemocratic'. He hoped therefore that Mr. Eden would draft at once a good declaration for the King, make him dismiss his Ministers, repudiate all contact with General Mihailović and form a 'stop-gap' Government not obnoxious to Marshal Tito. We might then 'have a forlorn hope of making a bridge between them in the next five or six weeks'.

Once again the Foreign Office thought that the Prime Minister was going too far. He seemed, in using the term 'repudiate all contact', to suggest that the King should deprive General Mihailović of his post as Commander-in-Chief as well as dismiss him as Minister of War. We might point out to the King the impossibility of making

¹ M. Subasić became Ban (roughly Viceroy) of Croatia after a Yugoslav decree of August, 1939, granting Croatia considerable autonomy. He had taken an important part in the negotiations leading to the decree. After leaving Yugoslavia in 1941 M. Subasić had been living in the United States, and had tried to secure unity among the Yugoslav groups there.

² See above, Chapter XXXVIII, section (iii).

(a) R5728/658/92.

headway with Marshal Tito as long as General Mihailović remained Commander-in-Chief, but we need not press for his immediate dismissal from this post and indeed were uncertain how in fact he could be turned out.

- (a) The Foreign Office drafted a declaration for King Peter, and the Prime Minister approved the draft on April 6. On this day also Mr. Eden had a long discussion with King Peter, and gave him the draft text. The King said he would study the text. He agreed that his present Government was unrepresentative and ineffectual, but he had little choice when he looked for an alternative. Furthermore, he was afraid that the Serbs might accuse him of abandoning them and that General Mihailović might set up his own Government. There would then be three Yugoslav Governments. Mr. Eden discussed possible names for inclusion in a new Government. The King said that he would send for M. Constantinović¹ who was in Cairo, and ask his advice.

- (b) Mr. Eden told the Prime Minister that M. Constantinović's advice would be most useful, and that we could do no more for the present. The King, however, delayed sending for M. Constantinović. On April 13 Mr. Churchill saw the King. He told him that a rapid advance might bring the Russians to Yugoslavia where they would certainly try to join forces with Marshal Tito. General Mihailović might oppose them. The King would then find himself involved, through his Minister of War, in a struggle on the side of the Germans against one of the principal United Nations. Although the King appeared to agree with Mr. Churchill's views on the urgency of a change of government, he was still doubtful about the choice of successors. He discussed this question with Mr. Stevenson on the following day. He now hesitated over M. Constantinović, and suggested, as an outstanding Serb, M. Yovanović, who had himself been Prime Minister,² and was not particularly 'pro-Mihailović'. He also agreed, at Mr. Stevenson's suggestion, to send for M. Subasić from the United States.³

¹ M. Constantinović had resigned from the Yugoslav Government when the latter, under the Prince Regent, had joined the Tripartite Pact in March 1941.

² See above, p. 284.

³ On April 17, King Peter wrote to President Roosevelt complaining of the British pressure on him to change his Government and to get rid of General Mihailović. The King asked for American intervention in the discussions. Mr. Roosevelt drafted a reply on May 12 (there is no indication when his letter was sent), in which he criticised the King's advisers and officials, and suggested that General Mihailović might be better employed in purely military work than as a Minister. He advised the King to consult M. Subasić on the reorganisation of his Government and said that American information showed that the Partisan movement was stronger and had more popular support

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Mr. Stevenson saw King Peter again on April 20. The King said (a) that he had talked with M. Yovanović, but found him unwilling to co-operate with M. Subasić, though the King hoped that he could bring the two men together. Mr. Stevenson once more impressed on the King the need for haste; the King answered that he was doing his best with the meagre and difficult material at his disposal. Six days later the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden again talked to King Peter.

The Prime Minister then sent a message to President Roosevelt (b) about the return of M. Subasić and to Lord Halifax instructing him to try to persuade M. Subasić to come to Great Britain. The Prime Minister, at this time, showed considerable impatience over King Peter's delays. In discussion with Mr. Eden he said that if the King did not take some vigorous steps, we should have to tell him (c) that we would recognise Marshal Tito's committee as a Government. Mr. Eden tried to dissuade Mr. Churchill from a course of this kind, and suggested that the best plan would be to leave the question alone for the moment. Mr. Eden also pointed out that the United States Government would not be in favour of a further move away from the King and his Government and towards Marshal Tito.

The Prime Minister was not convinced by Mr. Eden's arguments. On April 17 he had circulated to the War Cabinet a despatch¹ from (d) Brigadier Maclean on the military situation in Yugoslavia. The Foreign Office, while realising that Brigadier Maclean was providing valuable and indeed indispensable information, nevertheless described this report as 'too much like a company prospectus to be altogether convincing'. Brigadier Maclean anticipated the ultimate success of the Partisans, and assumed that this success would be in accordance with our interests, i.e. the establishment of a 'strong democratic and independent Yugoslavia'. The Foreign Office thought that Brigadier Maclean slurred over those aspects of the Yugoslav problem which were doubtful or unfavourable to his thesis, and that the chances of final success for either party were in

(continued)

than the Royal Government was willing to admit. *F.R.U.S.*, 1944, IV, 1359-61 and 1366-8. Marshal Tito had also written to the President asking for American support and describing General Mihailović as a traitor. An acknowledgement was sent on June 14 under the signature of the Head of the American Military Mission to the Partisans. Mr. Hull suggested this indirect method of reply 'on the grounds that there has been no abatement in the conflict between Tito and the Government which we continue to recognise'. *F.R.U.S.*, 1944, IV, 1356-7 and 1368-9.

¹ This despatch was dated March 18, and had reached the Foreign Office on March 28.

(a) R6688/658/92. (b) T966/4, No. 663 (Churchill Papers/511; R6760/195/92).
(c) R6713/658/92. (d) WP(44)196; R4905, 6406/8/92.

fact so very difficult to estimate that we should be unwise to take sides to a greater extent than was necessary.¹

(vi)

King Peter's dismissal of M. Purić's Government: attempts to form a new Government: appointment of M. Subasić as Prime Minister: meeting and agreement between M. Subasić and Marshal Tito: Marshal Tito's attitude towards the King (May 1–June 30, 1944).

Brigadier Maclean came to London at the beginning of May 1944. On April 30 the Prime Minister had been much interested in a new (a) 'compromise' proposal put forward by Colonel Hudson. The Prime Minister suggested to Mr. Eden that this proposal should be considered after Brigadier Maclean's arrival at a meeting of the various experts concerned, and that he (the Prime Minister) should then send a telegram to Marshal Tito in stronger terms than his previous messages. Mr. Churchill thought that there was now little hope for King Peter, and that his only chance was to dismiss his present Government, issue the proclamation drafted for him and 'keep clear of Mihailović'.

On May 2 the meeting suggested by the Prime Minister was held in the Foreign Office.² Sir O. Sargent explained that we had tried to bring about Yugoslav unity and mobilise Serbian manpower by a bargain between King Peter and Marshal Tito. Marshal Tito had refused collaboration with the King, and was possibly more sure of his own position than in November, owing to the supplies we were sending him and to the moral effect of our giving him a monopoly of support. He was also probably influenced by Russia. He clearly expected to obtain control of all Yugoslavia, including Serbia. Would he be able to do so without a civil war after the German withdrawal? Brigadier Maclean repeated the terms which Marshal Tito had already put forward about the King. The terms were a concession on Marshal Tito's part because he thought that on balance any association with the King would lose him (Marshal Tito) more supporters than he would gain. The Partisans seemed likely to be the decisive factor in Yugoslavia after the war, and the chances of their agreement to a restoration of the monarchy were very small. Colonel Bailey, on the other hand, thought that the King's prospects were definitely good in Old Serbia and that Marshal Tito's position was far from certain in Montenegro, the Sanjak, and Herzegovina. Each side probably underestimated the strength of the other. General Mihailović had convinced the Serbs

¹ Mr. Stevenson minuted the despatch to the effect that Brigadier Maclean did not mention Serbia, where our information led us to believe that the opposition to the Partisans was 'solid and uncompromising'. Mr. Stevenson thought that this fact should be given 'due weight when estimating Tito's chances of sweeping the country'. Mr. Eden (b) circulated to the War Cabinet, as providing a counter-weight to Brigadier Maclean's conclusions, a report received about this time from Colonel Hudson. Colonel Hudson and, in another report, Colonel Bailey mentioned the anti-Communist feeling of the people of Serbia.

² Mr. Eden was not present. Sir O. Sargent presided.
(a) R7213/44/92. (b) WP(44)234; R4148, 6690/8/92.

that the Partisan movement was an aggressively Communist and Croat Nationalist organisation. Marshal Tito underestimated the value which the King would be to him in bringing over the Serbs. If the King accepted Marshal Tito's conditions—especially the condition that he should join the Partisan forces in a private capacity—he would, in fact, be abdicating, and would almost certainly not bring the Serbs with him to the Partisan side.

Sir O. Sargent then brought forward Colonel's Hudson's plan as the only possible solution. Colonel Hudson proposed telling Marshal Tito that at this stage of the war it had become a military necessity for us to mobilise as guerrillas the 200,000 fighting men of Old Serbia. Marshal Tito ought to be able to do this if he would discard his Communism and thus reassure the Serbs. Brigadier Maclean said that Marshal Tito recognised the importance of gaining Serb support and that a message from the Prime Minister to this effect would do good. Marshal Tito, however, would then ask us to send more supplies to his forces in Serbia and would also claim that he must decide the best way of making concessions to the Serbs. He had already shown that he could go to considerable lengths in order to win over waverers to his side.

The meeting then decided upon a draft telegram which the Prime Minister might send to Marshal Tito, on the assumption that we could give him increased supplies in return for concessions on his part to the Serbs. Colonel Bailey dissented from the recommendation to the Prime Minister, and put forward a plan that the King himself should return to Serbia, dismiss General Mihailović, take command in person, and establish co-operation with Marshal Tito. The Foreign Office view of this plan was that it was doubtful whether the King would accept it, and if he accepted it, whether he would have the strength of character and determination to carry it out. In any case Marshal Tito was almost certain to refuse the plan.

Mr. Eden sent a minute to the Prime Minister on May 8 that (a) Colonel Hudson's plan seemed to offer the best chance of success. Mr. Eden summed up the plan in the words: 'Tito . . . should attempt to attract the Serbs in Serbia by making it plain that they can fight as separate units in his forces, not accepting Communist insignia, and wearing a crown [i.e. the royalist badge] if they so prefer.' Mr. Eden thought that we should put pressure on Marshal Tito to accept this solution, but that we must first be sure that we could supply the Serbs as well as the Partisans. This qualification was especially necessary because on May 6 General Wilson had pointed out to Sir O. Sargent that, although it was most (b)

(a) R7340/44/92. (b) R7339/44/92.

- desirable to mobilise the Serbs, there were great practical difficulties in supplying them with arms and ammunition. Colonel Bailey had
- (a) also pointed out that a promise from Marshal Tito to renounce aggressive Communism would not be enough. Colonel Bailey's view (with which the Foreign Office inclined to agree) was that Marshal Tito, in fact, had no intention of renouncing Communism indefinitely. In any case, however, the Serbs had had too much experience of the Partisans in the past two years to accept a promise of renunciation by Marshal Tito without a guarantee from the United Nations that a free plebiscite would be held in Yugoslavia after the war. We could not give this guarantee because we had not the means of implementing it.
 - (b) The Prime Minister discussed the whole question with Mr. Stevenson, Brigadier Maclean, Colonel Bailey and Colonel Hudson on May 6, but without deciding upon a policy. The Prime Minister therefore postponed sending a message to Marshal Tito until after King Peter had talked with M. Subasić about the formation of a
 - (c) new Government. He was prepared to allow a week for these
 - (d) conversations. M. Subasić arrived in London on May 7, and told Mr. Stevenson on May 9 that he would do his utmost to help the King. He thought that a monarchy was the only form of government which could unify Yugoslavia. His idea was that the King should form a small Government, non-political in character, with the aim of winning the war, and after it the peace. By winning the peace M. Subasić meant that the Yugoslav peoples should be free to choose the régime of a united Yugoslavia.
 - (e) M. Subasić put his views to King Peter on May 9. He insisted on the elimination of General Mihailović as Minister of War and pointed out to the King that he was himself Commander-in-Chief and could therefore restrict General Mihailović's command to that of the Royal forces in Serbia. M. Subasić, as a Croat, did not wish to be Prime Minister and would accept the post only with Serb
 - (f) support. On May 11, before he had had a second interview with M. Subasić, and without informing the Foreign Office or Mr. Stevenson, the King sent a message to the Prime Minister through Lord Melchett¹ that he proposed on the following Monday (May 15) to dismiss M. Purić and his Government, including General Mihailović, and to collect round his person about five advisers

¹ The King's somewhat unconvincing explanation why he used this channel of communication was that he happened to meet Lord Melchett and to find the latter would be meeting Mrs. Churchill on the same day. The King thought that his message would thus reach Mr. Churchill more quickly than by any other means.

(a) R7680/44/92.

(b) R7679/44/92. (c) R7558/658/92. (d) R7212/195/92. (e) R7559/658/92. (f) R7506/658/92.

with whom he would carry out such acts of Government as were open to him. The King wished to know whether Mr. Churchill would approve of this step.

Mr. Stevenson gave the King the Prime Minister's reply on May 15. (a) He said that Mr. Churchill approved of the decision to get rid of the present Yugoslav Government, but that he wanted to know whether the King intended to have a regular Government and whether he was proposing to make use of the declaration which we had prepared for him. King Peter answered that his 'personal advisers' would form a regular Government, though a small one, and that, when his Government had been appointed, he would issue the declaration as the basis of its policy. He had not found any of the Yugoslavs whom he had consulted ready to take responsibility. He was therefore proposing to form the Government round M. Subasić.

On the evening of May 16 the King told Mr. Stevenson that he had (b) just informed M. Purić and his colleagues of their dismissal as from May 18. He would announce his action on May 19; meanwhile he intended to consult M. Subasić about setting up a new Government. Mr. Churchill decided to send a message to Marshal Tito informing him that, as the result of our advice, the King had dismissed his (c) Government, which included General Mihailović as Minister of War, and, with our approval, was forming a Council of State¹ under the Ban of Croatia. We did not yet know what would happen in Serbia. General Mihailović held a powerful position locally as Commander-in-Chief, and his dismissal as Minister of War might not affect his influence there. There was also a very large body of Serb peasant proprietors who were anti-German but strongly Serbian, and who naturally held 'the views of a peasants' ownership community, contrary to the Karl Marx theory'.² The Prime Minister wanted these forces to work with Marshal Tito for a united, independent Yugoslavia. He therefore regarded it as important that King Peter's action should be given a fair chance of developing favourably, and that at least for a few weeks—after which Brigadier Maclean would be back in Yugoslavia—Marshal Tito would make no unfavourable comment.

The King's dismissal of M. Purić's Government was followed by a complicated series of discussions among the Yugoslav politicians in London. The main difficulty was the reluctance of the Serbs in London to join M. Subasić in forming a Government. After

¹ At the suggestion of the Foreign Office these words were changed to 'a small Government'.

² At the suggestion of the Foreign Office these last six words were deleted.

(a) R7834/658/92.

(b) R7835/658/92. (c) T1089/4 (Churchill Papers/511; R7947/44/92).

- much argument the Serbs eventually agreed to come into the Government on the understanding that General Mihailović would be recognised as the leader of Serbian resistance and that he would receive Allied help in this capacity if he fought the Germans. On being informed of these conditions the Foreign Office, through Mr. Stevenson, replied that, in view of our lack of confidence in General Mihailović, we could not accept any undertaking to support him. The Serb politicians then refused to join the new Government. On receiving their refusal King Peter decided to appoint M. Subasić as Prime Minister with the task of forming a Government which would be completed after consultation with all the Resistance groups in Yugoslavia. For this purpose of consultation M. Subasić proposed to go to Bari. Meanwhile the King would issue a declaration on the lines suggested to him by the British
- (a) Government. King Peter signed the *ukase* appointing M. Subasić as Prime Minister on June 1. The Foreign Office suggested that
- (b) the Prime Minister might send a message to Marshal Tito inviting him to send a representative to Bari to meet M. Subasić.

At this time a determined raid by the Germans on Marshal Tito's headquarters in Croatia upset his military plans and made it necessary for him to take refuge elsewhere in order to avoid capture and to be able to reorganise his Partisan forces. He therefore went to the island of Vis on the Adriatic coast. British forces were landed on the island in order to ensure his safety. Thus for the first time Marshal Tito was at a place accessible to the Yugoslav Government.

- (c) The Prime Minister considered that M. Subasić should see Marshal Tito while the latter was at Vis. The Marshal could hardly refuse an interview when he was sheltering under British naval and air protection. Mr. Churchill considered whether King Peter should also go to Vis, either at once or after M. Subasić had prepared the way for him. The Prime Minister told Mr. Eden on June 5 that he was in favour of the bolder course. Mr. Stevenson pointed out, however, on June 6 that, if the King went to Vis, the Serbs would say that we had kidnapped him and handed him over to the Partisans. We could not get over this difficulty by sending loyal Yugoslav troops to Vis because the result would be fighting between them and the Partisans. Mr. Stevenson did not think that the military situation was serious enough to make Marshal Tito completely pliable. He could hardly refuse to receive M. Subasić, but he might say that while he was separated from his political advisers he was unable to reverse their decision neither to co-operate with the King nor to allow him to return to Yugoslavia. Mr. Eden

(a) R8893/658/92. (b) R8803/658/92. (c) R9323/44/92; R9324/658/92.

agreed with this view, and advised the Prime Minister that M. Subasić should go first to Vis, and that the King should follow if the conversations were satisfactory.

Meanwhile on June 6 a message received in London from (a) Brigadier Maclean stated that Marshal Tito was going to establish himself for two or three weeks in the island of Vis because he needed a stable base from which to direct operations. Brigadier Maclean said that Marshal Tito was pleased at the developments in London and that he would be willing to talk over matters with M. Subasić if the latter could come to Vis. Meanwhile he would put a stop to all attacks on the King.

The Prime Minister and the Foreign Office regarded this proposal as most satisfactory. The Prime Minister was more optimistic than Mr. Eden. On June 8 he reverted to the idea that the King should (b) go at once to Vis with M. Subasić, and not run any risk of missing this last chance (Mr. Churchill described it as a 'God-sent opportunity') of recovering his position. Later Mr. Churchill accepted Mr. Eden's view that the King should await the outcome of M. Subasić's conversations before going to Vis. Mr. Churchill proposed that the King should stay close at hand in Malta. The Foreign Office still thought that Marshal Tito might say that he could not reverse the decisions of his Provisional Government. In spite of his military reverses, Marshal Tito knew that we could not throw him over if he refused to work with the King. Apart from the obvious military reasons for continuing our support, the political result of withdrawing it would be that Marshal Tito would go over completely to the Russians. The Prime Minister now sent a message to Marshal Tito. Owing to the new development this message differed slightly in (c) form from that suggested by the Foreign Office after the appointment of M. Subasić, but it stated definitely the view that Yugoslav unity could best be achieved by an arrangement between Marshal Tito and the King's new Government. The Prime Minister suggested to King Peter that he should offer Marshal Tito the post of Supreme Military Commander in Yugoslavia. M. Subasić also sent a message to Marshal Tito asking for a meeting. (d)

King Peter and M. Subasić left London on June 10. Mr. Stevenson (e) took with him Mr. Churchill's message, in the form of a letter, to Marshal Tito asking him to meet the King and to talk over with him in a friendly and informal manner matters of interest to the future of Yugoslavia. Mr. Churchill pointed out that, on the assumption that General Mihailović and 'some others' were finally excluded and that no decision affecting the future form of Government would

(a) R8992/8/92. (b) R9326/44/92.

(c) Churchill Papers/512; R9423/44/92. (d) R9325/658/92. (e) R10457/8/92.

be taken until after the liberation of the country, it was of the utmost importance to bring 'Serbia and its valiant people into the fight against Nazism'.

- (a) Mr. Stevenson reported from Vis that he had seen Marshal Tito on June 14 and, in handing over the Prime Minister's letter, had spoken of the importance which the British Government attached to an agreement between the King and his Government and the Marshal. Marshal Tito said that he also wished to reach an agreement, if it were possible. He did not exclude a meeting with the King 'a little later on', and was sure that he could come to a working arrangement with M. Subasić. On June 16 the latter (b) told Mr. Stevenson that he had in fact reached an agreement which he thought satisfactory.

The first article of this agreement described the composition and task of the Royal Government and stated that its main duty would be the 'organisation of Allied assistance to the National Liberation Army and to all those who in future will fight with the same determination against the common enemy'. The second article ran as follows: 'The National Liberation Committee of Yugoslavia and the Royal Government of Dr. Subasić will establish organs for the co-ordination of their efforts in activities against the enemy, in reconstruction work and in (? future)¹ these organs should also pave the way to the speedy establishment of a single representation of the State.' Article 3 stated that the National Liberation Committee considered the question of the monarchy not to be an obstacle to the collaboration of the Committee and the Royal Yugoslav Government, since both sides had accepted the principle that the peoples of Yugoslavia should decide on the organisation of the State after the war. Article 4 set out the terms of a declaration to be issued by the Royal Yugoslav Government. The declaration (i) announced the recognition of the 'provisional administration now established in the country as the executive organ of the anti-Fascist Council of National Liberation of Yugoslavia and of the National Liberation Committee', (ii) gave full acknowledgment to the national fighting forces under Marshal Tito, (iii) condemned (without mentioning names) traitors who had collaborated with the enemy and called upon the whole nation to unite all its fighting forces in a single front with the National Liberation Army. A fifth article stated that Marshal Tito would issue a declaration about collaboration with the Royal Yugoslav Government and would make it clear once more that the final organisation of the State would not be discussed during the war.

¹ The text at this point was uncertain.

(a) R9453/44/92. (b) R9591/658/92.

Mr. Stevenson said that M. Subasić had emphasised the importance of Articles 3 and 5. He appeared to have accepted Marshal Tito's estimate of the strength of the Partisan position in Serbia and to have reached the conclusion that the King and his Government must dispose of General Mihailović. Marshal Tito had given M. Subasić a solemn assurance that he did not intend to introduce any 'demoralising Communist system'¹ or to impose a 'party line' on the country after the war. Marshal Tito had repeated this assurance to Mr. Stevenson, and asked him to do his best to convince the British Government of its truthfulness. Mr. Stevenson thought that Marshal Tito meant what he said.

The Foreign Office did not feel enthusiastic about this arrangement, though they regarded it as all that could have been expected. There was no reference in it to the King, and no renunciation of 'compulsory Communism' except in a verbal promise. On the other hand M. Subasić had probably thought it wiser to leave the King's position in abeyance in order to obtain an agreement which at least secured that Marshal Tito would recognise and collaborate with the Royal Government. M. Subasić might hope to negotiate about the King's position later on in more favourable circumstances, but the prospects did not seem very hopeful.

On June 18 a further message was received from Mr. Stevenson (a) that Marshal Tito had said that a meeting between the King and himself should be possible 'a little later on'. Mr. Stevenson did not think it advisable to press Marshal Tito on the question at the present stage. Meanwhile M. Subasić and the Marshal were discussing 'practical questions'. Mr Stevenson telegraphed the results of this discussion on June 19. He said that the following decisions (b) (among others) had been taken: (i) Two members of the Partisan Movement, a Slovene and a Serb from Bosnia, would join the Royal Government; (ii) Marshal Tito would appoint a Serb from Serbia as liaison officer between the National Committee and the Royal Government; (iii) Yugoslav soldiers who volunteered to fight under Partisan leadership could wear, if they wished, the Yugoslav cockade and not the Red Star (i.e. the royal, and not the Partisan, emblem); (iv) Marshal Tito would be Supreme Commander-in-Chief of all Yugoslav forces.

Mr. Stevenson commented that Marshal Tito had made a very considerable step forward in recognising the Royal Government outside the country, and that he evidently thought that, with the Government behind him, he would get greater military and material support from the Allies. On the other hand, M. Subasić had accepted

¹ The Foreign Office thought that these words were possibly wrongly transmitted.

(a) R9592/658/92. (b) R9649/658/92.

a situation of fact and had drawn all possible advantages from it. M. Subasić was certain that the Partisan movement was already strong in Serbia, and would soon obliterate the Cetniks. This estimate might be wrong, but, in Mr. Stevenson's view, M. Subasić had diminished the chances of civil war in Yugoslavia after the liberation.

- (a) Mr. Stevenson reported on June 19 that Marshal Tito had given him a letter in reply to the Prime Minister's letter. Mr. Stevenson summarised the letter¹ in these terms: Marshal Tito described the question of King Peter as one of extreme delicacy which needed a prudent approach; otherwise the effect would be to cause confusion and thus weaken rather than unite the fighting forces. The question of the monarchy should therefore be left to time, and should await the end of the war. Mr. Stevenson reported in
- (b) another telegram that Marshal Tito had said frequently to M. Subasić that he personally had nothing against the King, but that the people of Yugoslavia did not realise that the King had not been responsible for the acts done in his name by General Mihailović. Marshal Tito thought that the chances of the King reigning after the war were small.

- (c) The Foreign Office, with the approval of the Prime Minister, telegraphed to Mr. Stevenson on the night of June 20-1 that it would be a great mistake not to take advantage of the opportunity of a meeting between the King and Marshal Tito. The arrangements made by M. Subasić had not improved the King's position or the chances of a *modus vivendi*, if not a union, between the Partisans and those Serbs—whether or not they were enrolled as Cetniks—who wanted to fight the Germans if they could do so without being compelled to accept Marshal Tito's Communism. M. Subasić's view that the Partisans would soon obliterate the Cetniks seemed to imply that the Cetniks would be suppressed by force of arms. We did not wish to this happen if we could prevent it. Mr. Stevenson was therefore asked whether it would be possible to get the question of the Serbs settled between M. Subasić and Marshal Tito before the return of the former to Great Britain.

- (d) Mr. Stevenson telegraphed on June 21 that in his view the recognition of the Royal Government by Marshal Tito had improved the King's position. Marshal Tito would be willing to see the King after the agreement had had time to affect opinion in Yugoslavia. Mr. Stevenson said that M. Subasić, and General Wilson, thought

¹ The Prime Minister asked that the full text should be telegraphed. The text was received in London on the night of June 23-4.

(a) R9648/658/92. (b) R9674/439/92. (c) R9675/658/92. (d) R9809/44/92.
 (e) T1347/4 (Churchill Papers/512; R9921/44/92).

it unwise to press for a meeting now with the King. M. Subasić had discussed the question of the Serbs at length with Marshal Tito; his (M. Subasić's) idea was that the King should call on all Serbs to fight with the Partisans and under the supreme command of Marshal Tito, but that they should not be asked actually to join the Partisan movement, and should continue to wear the Yugoslav cockade. The King had welcomed this proposal.

The Foreign Office were unconvinced by Mr. Stevenson's arguments, and suggested sending another telegram to him on the question of a meeting between the King and Marshal Tito, but, after discussing the question with the Prime Minister, Mr. Eden came to the view that nothing could be done in the matter, and that the King, M. Subasić and Mr. Stevenson should now return to England.

CHAPTER XLII

British policy towards Yugoslavia, July 1944-June 1945

(i)

The Prime Minister's conversations with Marshal Tito, August 12-13, 1944: further discussions between M. Subasić and Marshal Tito.

- The Foreign Office continued to think that the agreement between M. Subasić and Marshal Tito disregarded the interests and wishes of the Serbs, and was therefore unlikely to lessen the chances of civil war in Yugoslavia after the liberation of the country from the Germans. They were disconcerted to find that Brigadier Maclean seemed to be advising Marshal Tito in a direction contrary to the
- (a) policy recommended by them. Brigadier Maclean telegraphed on July 2 to the Supreme Allied Commander, Mediterranean Theatre, that since his return to Yugoslavia he had lost no opportunity of reminding Marshal Tito that we were most anxious to see him extend the scope of his movement in Serbia and further increase his activities there. Marshal Tito was now sending two extreme Communist members of his Committee into Serbia. The Foreign Office obtained the consent of the Prime Minister to the draft of a telegram pointing out to Brigadier Maclean that our policy was not to help Marshal Tito to impose his movement in Serbia but to promote co-operation between him and the Serbs. Brigadier Maclean was therefore asked to secure postponement of the proposal to send the two Communists into Serbia until Marshal Tito and M. Subasić had discussed the whole question of negotiating with the Serbs at a meeting which it was proposed to hold at Caserta. General Wilson had arranged this meeting at Marshal Tito's request, and was intending to preside over it.
- (b) The meeting did not take place. After M. Subasić, with Mr. Stevenson, had left London for Caserta, Marshal Tito, apparently at the instance of his political advisers, regarded it as 'beneath his dignity to meet the Ban of Croatia' and refused to leave Vis to attend
- (c) the meeting. Brigadier Maclean sent a message to General Wilson on

(a) R10399, 10409/8/92. (b) R10761/44/92. (c) R10763/44/92.

the night of July 10–11 that Marshal Tito had made all arrangements for going to Caserta but that his National Committee had decided that he should not go. The reactions, especially in Croatia and Slovenia, to the agreement with M. Subasić had been unfavourable and the Committee was afraid of the effects of another meeting upon the Marshal's prestige. Brigadier Maclean pointed out to Marshal Tito the extreme discourtesy of a sudden refusal of General Wilson's invitation. Marshal Tito was much embarrassed, but maintained that he could not override the decision of his Committee, though he realised the importance of holding military conversations as soon as possible. He said that he would prefer to meet General Wilson somewhere on the Adriatic coast of Italy, and hoped that the conversations would be purely military. If necessary, separate conversations could be held on political matters.

General Wilson replied to Brigadier Maclean that he should tell (a) Marshal Tito of his surprise at the Marshal's refusal at the last minute to attend the meeting for which he (General Wilson) had specially come back to Caserta. General Wilson also instructed Brigadier Maclean on the night of July 11–12 to come himself to report on the situation. Meanwhile Mr. Eden told the Prime (b) Minister that Marshal Tito appeared to be trying to get out of his agreement with M. Subasić; his suggestion about military conversations on the Adriatic coast merely showed that he wanted to extract further concessions without giving anything in return. Mr. Eden suggested that the Prime Minister should send a firm message to Marshal Tito that, in view of his agreement with M. Subasić, we could not understand his reluctance to another meeting with him or his inability to persuade his followers in the matter.

The Prime Minister replied on July 11 in a message to General (c) Wilson that there should be no question of pressing Marshal Tito to visit Caserta if he thought it beneath his dignity to meet M. Subasić. Marshal Tito was asking for many things which it would not be easy to supply. His stay at Vis entailed great additional military, naval and air precautions. Meanwhile, he had obtained from King Peter and M. Subasić many concessions for which he was now returning only a rebuff. The Prime Minister therefore thought that Marshal Tito in his present mood should 'go back to his mountains and get on with the fighting', and send any requests for supplies through the Military Mission. A message to this effect was therefore telegraphed to Brigadier Maclean; this message was followed on July 12 by a personal message to Marshal Tito, in which the Prime (d) Minister pointed out that it was essential to complete the settlement

(a) R10794/44/92. (b) R10773/44/92. (c) T1430/4 (Churchill Papers/512; R10946/44/92.) (d) T1433/4 (Churchill Papers/512; R10947/44/92).

with M. Subasić, since only by reconciling the Serbian nation to the Partisan movement through the Royal Government would it be possible to secure concentration against the enemy. After consultation with the Foreign Office, the Prime Minister decided not to include in this message the suggestion that Marshal Tito should now leave Vis.

- (a) On July 13 Mr. Macmillan telegraphed from Caserta that, after conversations with Brigadier Maclean, General Wilson and Mr. Stevenson, he advised that the best plan would be to leave Marshal Tito alone at Vis for a while. There were, in fact, no military questions requiring urgent personal discussion with him, and on the political side it would be better not to hurry matters. Marshal Tito had shown no wish to avoid discussions with M. Subasić, and had told Brigadier Maclean that he was sending General Velebit¹ to London as his representative with the Royal Government. Meanwhile Brigadier Maclean should wait a few days before going back to Yugoslavia; Mr. Stevenson and M. Subasić should return to London and the Prime Minister's message should not be delivered.
- (b) The Prime Minister strongly disapproved of these suggestions. He regarded them as 'grovelling to Tito' and proposed that his message should be delivered at once. Mr. Eden agreed with this view, and Mr. Macmillan was instructed accordingly.

- The Prime Minister's message, however, was not delivered because
- (c) Mr. Macmillan replied on July 15 that M. Subasić had already decided to return to London, and that General Wilson had to go back to Algiers² until July 21. Hence there could be no meeting with Marshal Tito for some time. Mr. Macmillan thought that there was 'no question of Tito being triumphant'. He seemed rather to be embarrassed and worried. Moreover the military conversations were now less important and had indeed become something of a bait for political contacts. As the Prime Minister had said, Marshal Tito was asking for a great many things which it was not easy to supply, especially in view of the demands now made on our resources for southern France and northern Italy. Mr. Macmillan, General Wilson and Mr. Stevenson—and also Brigadier Maclean—thought that Marshal Tito would be more embarrassed if he were 'left guessing' and that a message from the Prime Minister, if sent, should be in stronger terms. 'Let him [Marshal Tito] ask for it [a meeting], as we think he will, and when he does, in the first instance it might well be found inconvenient to General Wilson.'

(d) ¹ General Velebit was a lawyer from Zagreb. He appears to have been connected with the Partisan movement from its beginnings.

² General Wilson's headquarters were being moved from Algiers to Caserta. Mr. Macmillan went back to Algiers with General Wilson.

On July 16 Mr. Macmillan reported that Marshal Tito had in (a) fact asked whether he could see General Wilson for a purely military discussion within the next three days. General Wilson proposed to reply that he was occupied for the next ten days but would be glad to suggest a later date for a meeting. The Foreign Office telegraphed at once to Mr. Macmillan not to send an answer to Marshal Tito until he had received further instructions. These instructions were sent on July 18 to the effect that the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden would have preferred M. Subasić to have delayed a little until Marshal Tito had 'come round'. It was now impossible to hold the meeting, and no harm would be done by keeping the Marshal waiting for an answer to his latest message.

General Wilson sent a reply to Marshal Tito on the lines proposed (b) by the Foreign Office. There was, however, a delay almost of a fortnight before any further instructions were received at Caserta about the proposed meeting. This delay was due to the Prime Minister's absence in Normandy. The instructions telegraphed to Mr. Macmillan on July 30 were to the effect that General Wilson should warn Marshal Tito of the difficulty of separating political from military questions; the military question of the employment of the Yugoslav forces in the Near East or the disposal of the Yugoslav fleet could not be decided without discussion with M. Subasić. The only matter which could be arranged directly between General Wilson and Marshal Tito would be the sending of British supplies to the Partisans. Mr. Macmillan was told that the other questions might now have to wait for settlement because M. Subasić was probably going to Moscow.¹

Meanwhile the Prime Minister had decided to hold military and (c) political discussions with General Alexander in Italy. He thought that he might discuss also the Greek situation with members of the Greek Government who could come to Italy from Cairo, and that he might see M. Subasić and Marshal Tito. He therefore arranged with General Wilson that the latter's meeting with the Marshal should be fixed for the time of his own visit to Caserta.

The Prime Minister received Marshal Tito on the morning of (d) August 12. The Marshal was evidently nervous at the meeting. The Prime Minister's plan—which had considerable success—was to begin 'gently' with him and then to take a stiffer line. He told Marshal Tito that he wanted to see a strong and independent Yugoslavia, and that M. Subasić had similar views. On the other hand, 'chivalry' demanded that we should not 'let down' King Peter.

¹ See, however, below, p. 349.

(a) R11101/11/92. (b) R11456/11/92. (c) R13564/658/92. (d) R12603, 12604, 12606/44/92; R12740/8/92; R13760/11/92; R13951/9536/92.

The aim of all concerned should therefore be a satisfactory reconciliation between the Partisans and the Serbs. The Prime Minister pointed out that Marshal Tito's agreement with M. Subasić had already become less unpopular among the Partisans.

Marshal Tito said that he would be meeting M. Subasić later in the day. He understood our obligation to King Peter, but could not do anything about it until after the war when the Yugoslav peoples would be able to pronounce upon the question of the régime. Marshal Tito had no quarrel with the Serbs but only with General Mihailović's groups. He also said that he had no wish to introduce a Communist system into Yugoslavia, if only for the reason that most European countries after the war would be living under a democratic system and that Yugoslavia could not afford to differ from them. He thought that developments in the small countries depended upon the relations between the Great Powers, and that Yugoslavia would profit by the improvement in the relations between Great Britain, the United States and the Soviet Union. The Soviet Mission with the Partisans was definitely opposed to the introduction of the Soviet system into Yugoslavia. The Prime Minister asked Marshal Tito whether he would make a public statement that he was not intending to introduce Communism. Marshal Tito was reluctant to do this because it might give the impression that he had been forced to make such a statement. It was then explained to him that he might include in the declaration which, under his agreement with M. Subasić, he had promised to make, not only a statement with regard to Communism but also an undertaking that he would not use the armed strength of his Movement to influence the free choice of the people on their future régime. This declaration would be the counterpart to the declaration which M. Subasić had agreed to make.

Marshal Tito said that he would discuss the question with M. Subasić. He explained that he would be sending a letter later in the day to the Prime Minister mainly on the question of supplies, and the Prime Minister said that he would be sending the Marshal a memorandum on the British requirements. This memorandum restated the British view as follows:

'The desire of His Majesty's Government is to see a united Yugoslav Government, in which all Yugoslavs resisting the enemy are represented, and a reconciliation between the Serbian people and the National Liberation Movement.

His Majesty's Government intend to continue, and if possible to increase, the supply of war material to the Yugoslav forces now that an agreement has been reached between the Royal Yugoslav Government and the National Liberation Movement. They expect in return that Marshal Tito will make a positive contribution to the

unification of Yugoslavia by including in the declaration, which he has already agreed with the Yugoslav Prime Minister to make, not only a statement regarding his intention not to impose Communism on the country but also a statement to the effect that he will not use the armed strength of the Movement to influence the free expression of the will of the people on the future régime of the country.

Another contribution which Marshal Tito could make to the common cause is to agree to meet King Peter, preferably on Yugoslav soil.

If it should turn out that any large quantities of ammunition sent to you (sic) by His Majesty's Government are used for fratricidal strife rather than in self defence, it would affect the whole question of Allied supplies, because we do not wish to be involved in Yugoslav political differences.

We should like to see the Royal Yugoslav Navy and Air Force working all out for national liberation, but this cannot be agreed unless first of all due consideration is paid to the King, the constitutional flag, and the closer unity of the Government and the Movement.¹

In the afternoon of August 12 M. Subasić had a long and satisfactory discussion with Marshal Tito. M. Subasić thought that the Prime Minister's words had had a salutary effect. Marshal Tito agreed to make the declaration covering the two points proposed to him and suggested that M. Subasić should come to Vis for further discussions about it. The Prime Minister received M. Subasić after this meeting, showed him the text of our memorandum and advised him not to make any concessions unless Marshal Tito agreed to the proposals in it.

Marshal Tito's letter to the Prime Minister was sent before he had received the memorandum. He raised questions of supply and, in view of the possibility of an Allied landing in Istria, asked that the question of Istria and Slovenia should be 'clarified at least in broad outline'.¹ He said that on this territory, which the last peace treaty had given to Italy, there were not only the armed forces of the Yugoslav National Army of Liberation but also—where circumstances allowed—an organised Government.

¹ On August 13 General Wilson, through his Chief of Staff, gave Marshal Tito a memorandum on Allied plans for setting up Allied military government in the area of Istria. This memorandum stated that territory formerly under Italian rule would remain under direct Allied administration 'until its disposition had been determined by the Governments concerned'. This measure was necessary to safeguard Allied bases and lines of communication. The Allied forces would be supplied through Trieste and their communications on the north through Ljubljana, Maribor, and Graz would have to be protected by British troops. The Supreme Allied Commander expected the Yugoslav authorities to co-operate with him in carrying out this policy.

(a) R12590/44/92. (b) R12605/44/92. (c) R12706/658/92. (d) R12721/658/92.

- (a) On August 13 the Prime Minister invited M. Subasić and Marshal Tito to meet him. They told the Prime Minister that they had reached agreement on many points. They had decided to continue their discussions at Vis, and to issue their respective declarations in a few days' time (Marshal Tito had promised to include in his declaration the two statements for which we had asked).¹ They had agreed upon the amalgamation of the Royal Yugoslav Navy and the ships and men of the Partisans into a single force to be used, if possible, for operations in the Adriatic under the Commander-in-Chief of the Mediterranean Fleet. The Prime Minister asked whether Marshal Tito would now meet King Peter and suggested that the amalgamation of the Yugoslav naval forces would offer a suitable opportunity. The Marshal and M. Subasić, however, thought it premature to hold a meeting, but agreed to decide later upon a suitable time.
- (b) Prime Minister said that the question of an Allied move into Istria in collaboration with Partisan forces would have to be discussed with President Roosevelt. The status of Istria could not be prejudged. It might be a good thing to remove it from Italian sovereignty, but the matter would have to be left to the Peace Conference or, if there were no Peace Conference, to a meeting of the principal Allied Powers at which the Yugoslavs could state their claims. Meanwhile the territory would be administered under Allied Military Government. Marshal Tito said that he could not agree to an Italian civil administration, and asked that the Yugoslav authorities should be associated with the administration of the territory. It was suggested that M. Subasić, after consultation with Marshal Tito, should submit a memorandum on the subject to the British Government.

- Marshal Tito objected to the implication in the Prime Minister's memorandum that there was a gulf between his Movement and the Serbs. He maintained, with M. Subasić's support, that the National Liberation Movement was Serb in origin and was now largely Serb in composition. Mr. Eden telegraphed to the Prime Minister on August 15 that he was disturbed at M. Subasić's support of Marshal Tito's statements about the Serbs. M. Subasić, a Croat, seemed to be underestimating the Serb problem. There might be a number of Serbs among the Partisans but even more Serbs were opposed to them; if Serb interests were ignored, the chances of civil war would
- (d) be greatly increased. On August 17 the Prime Minister replied to Mr. Eden that he entirely agreed with his view, and that M. Subasić

¹ The declarations were published on August 21. The declaration of the Royal Government recognised the provisional administration established by the Anti-Fascist Council and National Liberation Committee pending the formation of a single administration for the country.

(a) R12705/658/92. (b) R12754/658/92. (c) Tel. Clasp 49 (Churchill Papers/512; R12754/658/92). (d) Tel. Chain 72 (Churchill Papers/512; R12832/658/92).

and Marshal Tito seemed to be getting on almost too well together. It was of the highest importance to prevent the major effort of the Partisans from being directed against the Serbs. We were planning operations which, if accepted by Marshal Tito, would draw his forces largely to the north.

On his return to England M. Subasić explained to Mr. Stevenson (a) that he was well satisfied with the progress made towards the realisation of his two main aims of uniting the Yugoslav peoples in resistance to the enemy and of preventing civil war after the German withdrawal. He had come to the conclusion that there was no important opposition to the National Liberation Movement even in Serbia. He realised, however, that the Serbs needed reassurance, and hoped that Marshal Tito's statements in his declaration would have a good effect. He also wanted to get more Serb support for his own Government. He said that Marshal Tito had repeatedly told him that he had no political ambitions. M. Subasić proposed to ask King Peter to appoint the Marshal Voivode of Yugoslavia, a historic post of the greatest honour, but limited in its activities to the military sphere.

The Foreign Office thought that M. Subasić was over-hopeful in his view that the Serbs would give no trouble and that Marshal Tito would be satisfied with a purely military post. On August 31 M. Subasić sent a message to Marshal Tito pointing out that the (b) entire Balkan area including Yugoslavia might be liberated within two or three weeks. It was therefore urgent to know whether, in the event of a German withdrawal, a single united Yugoslav Government would be formed. Such a Government was expected and was being pressed for by all sides. Hence all preparations should be made for its formation. The Foreign Office did not expect an answer to this message unless we put pressure on Marshal Tito for it.

(ii)

Marshal Tito's 'disappearance': the Prime Minister's and Mr. Eden's conversations in Moscow: Marshal Tito's invitation to M. Subasić (August 31–October 14, 1944).

On August 31 the Prime Minister wrote a minute to Mr. Eden that (c) it would be well to remember how great a responsibility would rest on us after the war when all the arms in Yugoslavia would be in Marshal Tito's possession, and the Marshal could subjugate the rest of the country with the weapons supplied by us. Mr. Eden noted on

(a) R13565/658/92. (b) R13565, 13850/658/92. (c) R13994/8/92.

this minute that the Foreign Office hardly needed a reminder of this danger, and that the Prime Minister had persistently 'pushed Tito' in spite of Foreign Office warning. Mr. Eden sent a reply to the Prime Minister on September 15 pointing out that the danger had arisen because our policy towards Yugoslavia had been determined by considerations of short-term military expediency rather than by those of long-term political interest. With this long-term interest in mind the Foreign Office had disliked the plan of forcing the King to break with General Mihailović before we had studied the position of the anti-Communist Serbs in post-war Yugoslavia. The policy of the Foreign Office had been to work for a united front. This policy of Cetnik-Partisan reconciliation had failed. We had now attempted to safeguard the future by inducing Marshal Tito to give positive assurances that he would not seek to introduce Communism or to impose a political solution on the country by force. Mr. Eden suggested that the extent to which Marshal Tito would keep to his assurances would depend largely on the attitude of the Russians who were now close to the Yugoslav frontiers. Mr. Eden thought that the time had come to tell Stalin frankly our views about 'post-war Yugoslavia' and to ask for his co-operation. Mr. Eden was therefore telegraphing to Sir A. Clark Kerr on the subject.

The reply was sent during the Prime Minister's absence in Quebec. Mr. Eden had already telegraphed to the Prime Minister about the action which he was taking with regard to Marshal Tito's answer to (a) M. Subasić. The answer, as the Foreign Office had expected, did not come at once. It reached London on September 7,¹ but does not appear to have been considered in the Foreign Office before the despatch of a telegram at 12.45 a.m. on September 8 from Mr. Eden to Brigadier Maclean for Marshal Tito endorsing M. Subasić's request to him. Brigadier Maclean was instructed to point out the necessity of establishing a united Government in order to reduce the risk of civil war after the German withdrawal.

Marshal Tito's reply to M. Subasić was unsatisfactory. He evaded the point about a united Government, and merely referred to it as unimportant at a time when the Partisans were fighting 'exceptionally hard battles' against the Germans.² He then asked for more armaments, and for the immediate use of the Yugoslav navy. The Foreign Office thought that there was now very great risk of the situation which they had so long feared and had been trying to

¹ The hour of receipt of the telegram is given as 11.35 a.m. It seems likely that the telegram of 12.45 a.m. on September 8 was drafted (as was often the case) some hours before it was finally sent for cyphering.

² The Foreign Office thought that this claim to be fighting 'exceptionally hard battles' was much exaggerated. For the activities of the Partisans at this time, see J. Ehrman, *Grand Strategy VI*, (H.M.S.O., 1956), Chap. II, especially pp. 43-7.

(a) R14140/8/92.

prevent, i.e. civil war in the absence of an agreement between the Partisans and the Royal Government at the time of the liberation of the country. The only course now open was to continue the pressure on Marshal Tito while it was still possible to do so, i.e. before the arrival of the Russians. The Foreign Office did not think that Brigadier Maclean's representations would have much effect in this direction or that it was safe to delay while the Prime Minister was asked to send a message to Marshal Tito. Mr. Eden therefore sent a message from himself to the Marshal on September 11 and telegraphed to the Prime Minister asking whether he would endorse (a) it by a message of his own. (b)

Mr. Eden told Marshal Tito that he was disturbed at the delay in forming a single united Yugoslav Government, and surprised that the Marshal did not consider the matter to be one of immediate importance. Mr. Eden said that, in view of the chances of liberation in the near future, it was essential to form a united Government which could take over control of the country, and which we should be able to recognise as the Government of Yugoslavia at the Peace settlement.

Mr. Eden's telegram to Sir A. Clark Kerr repeated the view that (c) the formation of a single united Yugoslav Government was the only way of avoiding civil war in Yugoslavia or the suppression of non-Partisans in Serbia by Marshal Tito's men, possibly with Russian support. Sir A. Clark Kerr was instructed to explain the situation to M. Molotov and to point out the importance, from the point of view of Anglo-Russian co-operation, of securing co-ordinated action. We and the Soviet Government both recognised the existing Yugoslav Government. We assumed that there was no question of any change in Russian policy, and that the Soviet Government, in the event of the liberation of Yugoslavia by the Soviet armies, would wish the Yugoslav Government to take over the administration of the country. A large measure of collaboration between the Yugoslav Government and Marshal Tito had already been secured, but the need for the establishment of a fully united Government was now urgent. We therefore hoped that the Soviet Government would use to this end their influence with Marshal Tito.

The Prime Minister agreed to send a message (through Mr. (d) Macmillan's office in Bari) to Marshal Tito. This message was telegraphed on September 16. It began with a reference to a complaint made by Marshal Tito alleging that the Allies were still supplying arms to the Cetniks and maintaining relations with

(a) R14140/8/92. (b) Tel. Cordite 129 (Churchill Papers/512; R14140/8/92).
(c) R14140/8/92. (d) T1777/4, Tel. Gunfire 142 (Churchill Papers/512; R14751/61/92).

General Mihailović.¹ The Prime Minister went on to say that he was increasingly concerned over the fact that a large portion of the ammunition and supplies which we had sent to Marshal Tito was being used by him against his own fellow-countrymen rather than against the Germans. The fact raised questions of great difficulty both for the present and the future. The Prime Minister said that he was much disappointed at Marshal Tito's failure to implement the arrangements made at Caserta for the formation of a united Yugoslav Government which the British Government could recognise officially. This latter aspect might become much more important if the war ended and negotiations began. The Prime Minister therefore hoped that, in making minor complaints, Marshal Tito would not forget the much larger matters in which we, who had done so much to help him, had not received sufficient satisfaction.

- (a) General Wilson had already sent a very strong reply to Marshal Tito's complaints, and had said that he did not intend to forward them to the British or American Governments. Mr. Macmillan therefore thought it better not to send the Prime Minister's message until the latter knew of General Wilson's action. With the Prime Minister's approval, however, Mr. Eden sent instructions that the message should go off at once. Mr. Macmillan therefore transmitted the message on the night of September 19-20.²
- (b) On the following day the Prime Minister replied to Mr. Eden's minute of September 15.³ He said that in his view there was a time in 1943 when we could have secured the return of King Peter and a good arrangement with Marshal Tito, but the opportunity had been lost. The Prime Minister now agreed that the situation could be dealt with only by conversations in Moscow, though we had to be careful not to give Marshal Tito any excuse for throwing himself completely into the hands of the Russians.

¹ The first of these charges was entirely untrue. As far as the second charge was concerned, there was no British liaison with General Mihailović. The Americans had two missions in General Mihailović's territory. One was an air crew rescue unit whose purpose was to evacuate Allied airmen; the other was a small Intelligence unit. The British authorities had disapproved strongly of the despatch of this second unit, and the Prime Minister had just persuaded the President to withdraw it, though it had not actually left. Marshal Tito had been told the facts about each of these units at the time when they entered Yugoslav territory. On August 26 King Peter had issued a decree dissolving the Headquarters of the Royal Yugoslav High Command, and had thus deprived General Mihailović of any authority as Commander-in-Chief.

² The message was delivered to Marshal Tito's Chef de Cabinet in a sealed envelope, but meanwhile Marshal Tito had left Vis (see p. 347). Mr. Macmillan reported the (c) Marshal's disappearance on the night of September 20-1 and said that he had not been able to deliver the message. He was instructed on October 1 to suspend it. When he received it back, he noticed that the envelope had been opened.

³ See above, p. 344.

(a) R14751/61/92. (b) R15074/44/92. (c) R14964, 14965, 16050/11/92.

The next development seemed to show that indeed Marshal Tito had put himself literally into Russian hands. On September 18 he (a) sent a reply to the message of September 8 from Mr. Eden endorsing M. Subasić's request for a united Government.¹ Marshal Tito claimed that conditions in Yugoslavia made it impossible as yet to consider the formation of a united Government and, particularly, a Royal Government. The National Committee already exercised full authority throughout the country, and was therefore competent to bring the struggle of liberation to a successful end. The Royal Government could continue to function undisturbed as representing Yugoslavia with the Allies in agreement with the National Committee. When the time came, consideration would be given to the possibility of forming a single, united, People's Government which would undertake all necessary measures to allow the people of Yugoslavia to decide definitely about their future régime.

This message was received in London on September 22. On the (b) previous day the Foreign Office had been informed by the military authorities in the Central Mediterranean Command that Marshal Tito had left Vis, apparently in a Russian aeroplane, on the night of September 18-19.² His Chief of Staff said that he had decided suddenly to go to Serbia, and would not return to Vis. The British military authorities, however, were inclined to think that he had flown not to Serbia, but to Roumania or Russia.

No further information about the Marshal's destination had reached the Foreign Office on October 1, and no reply had been received from the Soviet Government, although Sir A. Clark Kerr (c) had delivered Mr. Eden's message on September 18. The Foreign Office, therefore, with the Prime Minister's approval, telegraphed to Mr. Macmillan that they were still waiting for a reply to a message (d) from Mr. Eden³ to Marshal Tito on September 11 urging the need for forming a united Government immediately. The British Government considered Marshal Tito's behaviour in vanishing, and in remaining indefinitely out of touch, to be unpardonable, and wished his representative to be informed of their displeasure. Mr. Macmillan was told (for his own information) that, if the replies from Marshal Tito to our messages, and⁴ to a suggestion by M. Subasić that he should go to discuss with Marshal Tito the formation of a united

¹ See above, p. 344.

² The Foreign Office already knew from Mr. Macmillan that Marshal Tito had left Vis. See p. 346, note 2.

³ See above, p. 345.

⁴ On October 10 Mr. Broad, who was in charge of Mr. Macmillan's office at Bari, replied that Marshal Tito's last message was intended to be a reply both to Mr. Eden's (e) message of September 8 and the message of September 11.

(a) R15048/658/92. (b) R14964, 14966, 15352/11/92. (c) R15223/1270/92.
(d) R15698/44/92. (e) R16221/11/92.

Yugoslav Government, were not forthcoming or were unsatisfactory, we should have to consider putting pressure upon the Marshal by a threat that we would be unable to deal with him at the peace settlement unless, in agreement with M. Subasić, he formed a united Government which we could recognise as the Government of Yugoslavia. We were also not impressed with reports of the operations now being undertaken by the Partisans. The moment had come for which they had been waiting throughout the war, but we had an uneasy feeling that they might still be eliminating the remaining Cetniks with arms supplied by us rather than undertaking widespread operations against German communications in Serbia.¹

- (a) In considering the probable attitude of the Soviet Government to their request for co-ordinated Anglo-Russian action in Yugoslavia, the Foreign Office had to take into account the reserve which the Russians had shown during the past nine or ten months towards the Yugoslav disputes. Although the Soviet Government had maintained diplomatic relations with the Royal Government in exile, these relations had been cut down to a minimum, and Russian sympathies were clearly with the Partisans. On December 14,
- (b) 1943, the Foreign Office had given the Soviet Ambassador in London a memorandum explaining British policy towards Yugoslavia, and enquiring whether the Soviet Government agreed in working for collaboration between the two groups. The Soviet Government
- (c) replied on December 20, 1943, that they would do everything possible to find a compromise between the two sides, but that there
- (d) were great difficulties in the way. In April 1944, Mr. Churchill informed M. Molotov that he had advised King Peter to form a new Government composed of men not obnoxious to Marshal Tito and
- (e) also preserving relations with Serbia. M. Molotov had said that it was difficult to see what result could come from negotiation with King Peter since he was still linked with General Mihailović. Changes in the Government would be without significance if no use were to be made of the support of Marshal Tito and his army. M. Molotov thought it would be better to come to an agreement with Marshal Tito, who exercised real power in Yugoslavia.
- (f) After the resignation of M. Purić's Government M. Subasić sent a message to M. Molotov telling him of his efforts to form a new

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- (g) ¹ Mr. Broad replied on October 6 that the Partisans had done a good deal to harass enemy troop movements in Serbia. The Germans had recently moved considerable bodies of troops from Bulgaria and Roumania into eastern Serbia and Macedonia, and the Partisans were not strong enough or sufficiently well supplied to deal with them.

(a) R15873/1270/92. (b) R13359/12703/92 (1943). (c) R13613/143/92. (d) T819/4 (Churchill Papers/511; R6088/658/92). (e) T913A/4 (Churchill Papers/511; R6673/1270/92). (f) R9214/370/92. (g) R16048/11/92.

Government. In his reply M. Molotov said that the Soviet Govern- (a)
ment would welcome the unification of all forces in Yugoslavia who
were fighting against Hitlerite Germany, and the traitors Pavelić,
Nedić and Mihailović. The Soviet Government would support a
Yugoslav Government formed with this object and on the basis of an
agreement with Marshal Tito. M. Subasić sent another message to
M. Molotov after his agreement with Marshal Tito at Vis in June (b)
1944. He asked whether the Soviet Government would discuss the
improvement of Soviet-Yugoslav relations and especially the transfer
of the Soviet Ambassador to the Yugoslav Government from Cairo
to London and the appointment of a Yugoslav Ambassador to the
Soviet Union. He also said that he would like to visit M. Molotov in
Moscow.

M. Molotov replied on July 19 approving M. Subasić's efforts, (c)
and agreeing to his suggestions. When M. Subasić later repeated his
proposal that he should visit Moscow, he was told that it would be (d)
better to postpone his visit in view of the 'manifold preoccupations of
the Yugoslav Government'. The Yugoslav Government appointed as
their Ambassador to Moscow M. Simić, a supporter of Marshal
Tito. The Soviet Government did not make an appointment to the
Yugoslav Government in London, and the latter did not know the
Soviet attitude towards them. The Soviet High Command reached
an agreement with the National Committee regarding the entry of
Soviet forces into Yugoslav territory, but said nothing in the matter
to the Yugoslav Government in London. The Foreign Office con-
sidered that one reason why they had not replied to the latest
British request for collaboration might well be that they hoped to
reach Belgrade, and instal there a Government under Marshal Tito
which would ignore King Peter, M. Subasić and the London
Government.

On his visit to Moscow with Mr. Eden the Prime Minister raised (e)
informally, at his first conversation with Stalin and M. Molotov on
October 9, the question of the Balkans. The Prime Minister sug-
gested a rough division of 'predominance' between Great Britain and
Russia expressed roughly in percentage terms.¹ The Prime Minister
suggested a '50-50' division as regards Yugoslavia. Stalin accepted
this figure. On the following day M. Molotov said that he had a
secret to tell Mr. Eden. Marshal Tito had recently been in Moscow,
and had wished the fact of his visit to remain unknown. He had come
in order to reach an agreement upon joint military action in Yugo-
slavia, where the Soviet forces were relatively weak and needed the

¹ For this discussion and the Prime Minister's comments on it, see above, pp. 150-51.

(a) R9650/1270/92.

(b) R11159/155/22. (c) R11440/1270/92. (d) R12122/1270/92. (e) R16330/11/92.

effective co-operation of the Partisans. Mr. Eden said that he took the strongest exception to the fact that neither Marshal Tito nor the Soviet Government had told us of this visit. The Marshal had been living under our protection at Vis. We had armed and equipped his forces and made possible his military operations. M. Molotov at once put all the blame on Marshal Tito. He said that he was a peasant who understood nothing about politics; that he had the secretiveness of his type and had not dared to impart his plans to anyone. Mr. Eden again pointed out the effect which such behaviour must have on Anglo-Soviet relations, and especially on people in Great Britain who were already saying that the Russians were following their own policy in the Balkans without regard to us.

At a formal meeting with M. Molotov in the evening of October 10 Mr. Eden again said that the British Government were unhappy over the situation in the Balkans. The Russians seemed to be presenting them always with *faits accomplis*. Mr. Eden spoke mainly of Bulgaria and Greece, but also mentioned Yugoslavia and Marshal Tito's behaviour. In the course of the discussion M. Molotov suggested that the Russians should have a 75 per cent responsibility for Yugoslavia. Mr. Eden said that he could not make this suggestion to the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister was greatly interested in Yugoslavia and had defended Marshal Tito and supplied him with arms. M. Molotov then tried to secure a higher 'percentage' for Russia in Bulgaria if the Soviet Government consented to maintain equality of responsibility for Yugoslavia. He said that Russia should have preponderant influence inland, and Great Britain on the coast.

On the following day M. Molotov gave way on the Yugoslav 'percentage', and accepted a 'fifty-fifty' division of responsibility. Mr. Eden then said that he had received a telegram to the effect that Marshal Tito had invited M. Subasić to meet him in Serbia within the next ten days in order to discuss the formation of a single Yugoslav Government. Mr. Eden suggested that he and M. Molotov should send a message to M. Subasić and the Marshal that they

- (a) hoped for an agreement between them. M. Molotov accepted the proposal, and a joint telegram to this effect was sent on October 13.
- (b) In his memorandum of October 12 on the arrangement about 'percentages of predominance' the Prime Minister wrote:¹

'... the numerical symbol 50-50 is intended to be the foundation of joint action and an agreed policy between the two Powers now closely involved, so as to favour the creation of a united Yugoslavia after all elements there have been joined together to the utmost in driving out the Nazi invaders. It is intended to prevent, for instance,

¹ See also above, p. 152.

(a) R16565/658/92. (b) P.M. unnumbered memorandum (Churchill Papers/66/7).

armed strife between Croats and Slovenes on the one side and powerful numerous elements in Serbia on the other, and also to produce a joint and friendly policy towards Marshal Tito, while ensuring that weapons furnished to him are used against the common Nazi foe rather than for internal purposes. Such a policy, pursued in common by Britain and Soviet Russia, without any thought of special advantages to themselves, would be of real benefit.'

(iii)

M. Subasić's visits to Yugoslavia and Moscow: agreement between M. Subasić and Marshal Tito over a united Yugoslav Government (October 22–December 23, 1944).

Marshal Tito's invitation to M. Subasić had reached him on Octo- (a)
ber 9 through General Velebit. M. Subasić was much pleased at the
message, and left within a day or two for Bari only to be kept
waiting without further news about a meeting. He then suggested
that it might be better not to hold the meeting on Yugoslav soil but (b)
for him, if possible, to go to Moscow, where he also wished to find
out what the Russians really wanted in Yugoslavia. On October 19,
however, Marshal Tito sent an urgent request that M. Subasić
should go to Yugoslavia at once. Marshal Tito sent a Russian
aeroplane to Bari to fetch him. He also said that he would like
British and Russian representatives to be present at the later stages
of the discussions.

On October 22 M. Subasić left Bari in the Russian aeroplane
provided for him. A week later a message was received from Brigadier (c)
Maclean that Marshal Tito had reached an agreement with M.
Subasić on the lines that King Peter would appoint a Council of
three Regents to represent him in Yugoslavia pending a decision on
the ultimate form of government. The Regents would form a
Government of eighteen Ministers chosen from the Royal Govern-
ment and the National Committee. This Government would conduct
the plebiscite about the régime.

Marshal Tito repeated to Brigadier Maclean that the King was
still precluded by the decree of November 1943 from returning to
Yugoslavia before the plebiscite. Brigadier Maclean asked whether
Marshal Tito would expect the Allies to recognise the new Govern-
ment as the Provisional Government of Yugoslavia on approxi-
mately the same terms as we had recognised the French Provisional
Government. Marshal Tito replied that he certainly expected recogni-
tion; otherwise, from the point of view of the Partisans, there would
be little advantage in the compromise which they had accepted.

(a) R16311/658/92; R16829/11/92. (b) R16830/11/92. (c) R17370/8/92.

Neither the Prime Minister nor Mr. Eden considered this arrangement satisfactory. The Prime Minister thought that we might try to substitute King Peter for the Regents on the basis that Marshal Tito would become the Governor of a United Yugoslavia under the King. Mr. Eden, who was in Rome, considered it unfortunate that

- (a) Brigadier Maclean, without instructions to do so, should have offered recognition for the new Government. Mr. Eden thought that recognition by 'stages', as in the case of the French, might be more convenient.

The Foreign Office agreed that Brigadier Maclean would have been wiser not to have raised the question of recognition, but thought that he had not gone beyond asking whether Marshal Tito would expect it. They were also inclined to regard the proposed arrangements as unexpectedly favourable to the King, and felt that it would be unwise to tamper with them. They agreed, however, with the Prime Minister's proposal to tell Brigadier Maclean not to commit himself to approval of the proposals until they had been discussed in London and with the Soviet Government.

- (b) Further details of the agreement arrived within the next few days. They showed that the three Regents would be nonentities—one of them, a Serb, was ninety years old¹—and that M. Subasić would merely be a member of a Government in which Marshal Tito was
- (c) Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Commander-in-Chief. The Government would consist of twenty-eight—not eighteen—members of whom five would be M. Subasić and his present colleagues. Two of these colleagues were representatives of the Partisans, so that Marshal Tito would have a majority of twenty-five to three.

Nonetheless the Foreign Office continued to think—and Brigadier Maclean's telegrams supported this view—that it would be impossible to get anything better. They wished to discuss the agreement with M. Subasić before British acceptance was given to it, but

- (d) M. Subasić announced on November 3 that he was going to Moscow, and was asking Brigadier Maclean to return to England to
- (e) explain the agreement to King Peter. The Prime Minister telegraphed a message to M. Subasić in Moscow that he could not yet give a considered opinion on the proposals, and that M. Subasić
- (f) should come to England as soon as possible. Mr. Churchill sent a message to Stalin that he had not yet had time to make up his mind about the agreement.

M. Subasić—to the annoyance of the Prime Minister and the

¹ This nomination was subsequently changed. M. Subasić was satisfied with the three names finally put forward for the Regency.

(a) R17609/658/92. (b) R17723, 17877/658/92. (c) R17903/658/92. (d) R17816/1270/92. (e) T2045/4 (Churchill Papers/512; R18154/658/92). (f) T2046/4, Churchill Papers/512.

Foreign Office—now disappeared for ten days without sending information about his whereabouts. On November 12 he telegraphed (a) that he was still in Belgrade, apparently held up by bad weather. His journey to Moscow was then made partly by train; he did not arrive until November 21 or 22. He told Sir A. Clark Kerr on (b) November 22 that M. Molotov had said to him that the Soviet Government agreed with the British Government in wanting to see a united Yugoslav Government. On November 24 the Prime Minister (c) received a message from Stalin that M. Subasić was leaving Moscow and that it would be undesirable to postpone the operation of the agreement which he had made with Marshal Tito. Stalin hoped therefore that the Prime Minister would accept the agreement after he had seen M. Subasić. M. Subasić did not come to London until (d) December 9. He told Brigadier Maclean before leaving Yugoslavia that Stalin had said that the Yugoslavs must not try any revolutionary experiments or attempt an imitation of the Soviet régime. The elections must be free and on democratic lines.

Meanwhile Marshal Tito had been causing considerable diffi- (e) culties. The Foreign Office had received reliable reports of savage reprisals by the Partisans in Dubrovnik and elsewhere. Marshal Tito had also asked the British authorities to provide him with more equipment rather than to introduce more British forces and had said that in any case the introduction of these forces must be agreed between him and the Prime Minister. General Wilson telegraphed to the Prime Minister that he regarded this demand as unacceptable. (f)

The Prime Minister, with Mr. Eden's agreement, telegraphed on November 20 to General Wilson that his confidence in Marshal Tito, (g) which had weakened when he met him at Caserta, had been 'destroyed by his levanting from Vis in all the circumstances which attended his departure'. Our agreement with the Russians about a joint policy did not prevent us from landing forces in Yugoslavia. The Prime Minister went on to say that M. Subasić had 'sold out on pretty cheap terms' to Marshal Tito, and was going to Moscow. We had not yet accepted the arrangements made for a joint Yugoslav Government because King Peter had first to give them his approval. We thought that the King would be unwise to reject them. At present, however, there was no question of recognising Marshal Tito as more than the leader of the guerrillas whom we wished to aid in every possible way.

On November 23 Mr. Churchill asked Brigadier Maclean (who (h) was about to return to Yugoslavia after bringing home—at M. Subasić's request—the text of the agreement) to give him some notes

(a) R18431/658/92. (b) R19028/1270/92. (c) T2177/4 (Churchill Papers/512; R19401/658/92). (d) R20312, 20314/658/92. (e) R18851/8/92. (f) T2136/4 (Churchill Papers/513; R18997/8/92). (g) T2141/4 (Churchill Papers/512; R18997/8/92). (h) R19512, 19513 44/92.

for a message to Marshal Tito. On the basis of these notes, with considerable modifications and additional suggestions from the Foreign Office and the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, the Prime Minister drafted a long message. Before this message was sent the Prime Minister heard a further account of the situation from General Wilson who had come over to England for a short visit. The Prime Minister now changed his plan, and asked the Chiefs of

(a) Staff to propose a new draft. The greater part of the message in
 (b) the new draft dealt with military matters. The Prime Minister said that he was astonished to hear a report that Marshal Tito wished the British forces in the Dubrovnik area to be withdrawn. He also mentioned several cases in which Partisan officers had refused to allow British warships to use Yugoslav ports; in one instance there was a threat that the Partisan shore batteries had orders to open fire on any ship which could not produce authority for passage from Marshal Tito's headquarters. The Prime Minister asked Marshal Tito to issue orders to ensure that British forces had every facility for co-operation with the Partisans.

The Prime Minister then turned to political questions. He said¹ that the draft agreement with M. Subasić should provide a good basis for an understanding, but that there were certain doubtful points, and that for their clarification we were awaiting M. Subasić's return to London, and his report to the King and the Yugoslav Government. Mr. Churchill said that we attached the greatest importance to the assurance that the forthcoming elections in Yugoslavia should be genuinely free. British public opinion would require, for example, that any group or political party in Yugoslavia other than traitors and war criminals, should be free to put forward candidates, and to state its views. It was also essential that the Yugoslav people should express their views about the monarchy directly by a free plebiscite and not merely by indirect methods.

(c) The Prime Minister concluded by telling Marshal Tito that he was sending a copy of his message to Stalin. As Marshal Tito knew, we had agreed with the Soviet Government to follow a joint policy 'on equal balance' in Yugoslavia. Marshal Tito, however, seemed to be treating us in an increasingly invidious fashion. His ambitions to occupy Italian territories on the north of the Adriatic might be leading him to suspect and dislike every military operation carried out by us on the Yugoslav coast against the Germans. Mr. Churchill however, had already assured Marshal Tito that all territorial questions would be reserved for the Peace Conference.

¹ This paragraph from the original draft was inserted at the request of the Foreign Office.

(a) R20171/11/92. (b) T2246/4 (Churchill Papers/512; R19991/44/92). (c) T2247/4 (Churchill Papers/512; R19991/44/92).

Brigadier Maclean delivered the Prime Minister's message to (a) Marshal Tito on December 6. Marshal Tito was considerably taken aback, and apologised for the actions of his subordinates. He asked that, in order to prevent misunderstandings, we should conclude a series of comprehensive agreements covering the operations of Allied naval, military, or air forces on Yugoslav territory or in Yugoslav waters. Marshal Tito said that he would give us exactly the same terms which he had granted to the Russians. Marshal Tito also raised the question of recognition. Brigadier Maclean referred him to the Prime Minister's message, and added that we were likely to give provisional recognition to a satisfactory government formed by M. Subasić and himself, but that we should not commit ourselves until we had received M. Subasić's report, and that much would depend on our judgment of the way in which the Government behaved.

The Foreign Office telegraphed to Brigadier Maclean on December 12 to ask whether Marshal Tito was sending a written reply to the Prime Minister. Verbal assurances and apologies made to Brigadier Maclean were insufficient; we also required definite information on the political points in the Prime Minister's note.

Stalin replied to the Prime Minister's message on December 14.¹ (b) He said that, before expressing an opinion on the matters touched upon in the Prime Minister's note to Marshal Tito, he wanted to hear the latter's own views on them. Stalin, however, confirmed the Prime Minister's statement that the Soviet and British Governments had agreed in Moscow to pursue as far as possible a joint policy in Yugoslavia. He hoped that the Prime Minister would be able to come to an agreement with Marshal Tito and that he would support the agreement arrived at between the latter and M. Subasić.

The Prime Minister considered that this message was satisfactory in view of the stiffness of his own message to Marshal Tito. He (c) replied on December 19 to Stalin with another reference to the agreement about a joint policy. He said that Mr. Eden had seen M. Subasić² and that, with the additions which M. Subasić secured after his return from Moscow, the agreement seemed a satisfactory basis upon which to build a new federal Yugoslavia. The Prime Minister was sure that Stalin would agree with him in regarding it

¹ The reply also dealt with an enquiry from the Prime Minister about a captured German acoustic torpedo.

² Mr. Eden appears to have seen M. Subasić on December 18, but it has not been possible to trace any record of their conversation. The Prime Minister and Mr. Eden were at this time much occupied with the events in Greece; see Chapter XLIII, section (v).

(a) R20201, 20276, 20277/11/92. (b) T2363/4 (Churchill Papers/512; R21294/1270/92). (c) T2399/4 (Churchill Papers/512; R21354/658/92).

as essential that the Yugoslav people as a whole should have complete freedom to decide upon the questions of the monarchy and the new federal constitution.

- (a) Marshal Tito's reply to the Prime Minister was received in London on December 21. Marshal Tito attributed the incidents to which Mr. Churchill had referred to misunderstandings on both sides arising from the lack of comprehensive agreements regulating the relations between the British and Yugoslav military authorities. He said that he fully appreciated the need for collaboration, and did not suspect British motives in wishing to land troops on Yugoslav territory or territory to which Yugoslavia had claims. The Yugoslavs had no intention of seeking to prejudge the decisions of the Peace Conference, and knew that this was also the attitude of their great Allies. It was, however, natural that they should wish to be consulted about the basing of Allied forces on their territory.

Marshal Tito also gave the strongest assurances that the elections in Yugoslavia would be free, and that all individuals, groups and parties, other than those guilty of treason or criminal activities, would be given an opportunity of taking part in the political life of the country. The National Committee had already issued an amnesty enabling many thousands of persons compromised by their war-time collaboration to regain their status as citizens. No decision had been taken as yet about the best method of ascertaining the wishes of the nation with regard to the future of the monarchy. A plebiscite was being considered, but the question of method would be decided by the Anti-Fascist National Council and the new Government.

- (b) M. Subasić and Marshal Tito had in fact discussed this question, and a supplementary agreement of December 7 between them had laid down that elections for a Constituent Assembly to decide the future form of Government would be held within three months of the total liberation of the country. M. Subasić thought that an assembly of this kind would be more likely than a plebiscite to give a fair and unbiased expression of the people's will with regard to the question of the monarchy.
- (c) The Prime Minister and Mr. Eden discussed the terms of the agreement with King Peter on December 21. Mr. Eden (and Mr. Stevenson) regarded the terms as 'on the whole even better than we had hoped'. Mr. Churchill strongly advised the King to accept the arrangement with good grace, and to let his acceptance be seen as a spontaneous act. There was, in fact, no alternative. The King disliked the Regency plan but, as Mr. Churchill pointed out, there was no other practical way of keeping alive the principle of monarchy in a country where a revolution was in progress. The

(a) T2407/4 (Churchill Papers/512; R21534/44/92). (b) R20965, 21065/658/92; R21045/745/19. (c) R21714/658/92.

King said that, if he accepted the agreement, he would like to explain in a declaration that he was acting to the best of his ability in the interests of his people. The Prime Minister and Mr. Eden approved of this proposal. Finally the King said that he would consider the matter and let Mr. Eden know his decision as soon as possible. The King gave the impression that he would accept the agreement.

On December 23 the Prime Minister sent another message to (a) Marshal Tito. He began with the words: 'let me assure you that we are friends, and that we intend to remain so. As I know you feel the same, let this govern all our talks.' The Prime Minister then said that he had seen King Peter, and had advised him to accept generally the proposals put forward for a Regency. Mr. Churchill hoped to send a telegram later about the constitutional position;¹ he repeated that 'our duty and, to some extent our honour', were engaged in the matter of the monarchy, and that only a fair plebiscite could relieve us of our obligations.

(iv)

King Peter's refusal to accept the Tito-Subasić agreement of October 1944: British decision to support the agreement in spite of the King's objections: three-Power decision at the Yalta Conference (December 29, 1944–March 14, 1945).

King Peter replied by letter on December 29 to the Prime Minister's (b) advice that he should accept the agreement between M. Subasić and Marshal Tito. The Prime Minister, in forwarding the King's (c) letter to Mr. Eden, for circulation to the War Cabinet, said that he still proposed to recommend the King to acquiesce in the agreement, since it would preserve, at least for a short while, the principle of the monarchy. The agreement was, however, entirely one-sided, and could mean 'nothing but the dictatorship of Tito, that well-drilled Communist'.

Mr. Eden drew up a note for the War Cabinet to accompany the (d) King's letter. He said that the letter was a fair criticism, from the King's point of view, of the terms of the agreement.² It was, however, useless to argue the theoretical rights and wrongs of the matter in the light of the Yugoslav constitution and the King's prerogatives.

¹ On December 24 the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden flew to Athens. They were away from London until December 29.

² The King's letter included the words: 'I will never oppose the freely expressed will of my people. For this reason and till that moment, I must have full guarantees that the popular will shall be really freely expressed.' Mr. Eden commented on the last sentence that he shared the King's feelings.

(a) T2423/4 (Churchill Papers/512; R21846/11/92). (b) R352/130/92. (c) WP(45)4. (d) WP(45)13.

The crude reality of the situation was that Marshal Tito was in possession of Yugoslavia and could choose whether or not the monarchy should be restored. The King's prospects therefore depended entirely upon Marshal Tito's goodwill; he could obtain this goodwill only by signing the agreement. Any further delay was dangerous; M. Subasić had now been in England for several weeks, and Marshal Tito was becoming restive. If the King did not soon come to a decision Marshal Tito would abandon the agreement and set up his own Government without reference to the monarchy or to M. Subasić.

- The Prime Minister authorised Mr. Eden to tell the War Cabinet that they proposed to see King Peter at once and to advise him to accept the agreement. Mr. Eden was also informing the United States Government of our intentions.¹ Hitherto the United States Government had refused to commit themselves but had not actually
- (a) disapproved of what we were doing. King Peter sent another letter to the Prime Minister on January 4. Mr. Eden again thought that, from the point of view of constitutional law, there was much to be said for the King's arguments, but these arguments overlooked the fact that a revolution had occurred in Yugoslavia.
 - (b) The War Cabinet approved the proposed course of action on January 8. The Prime Minister and Mr. Eden had already discussed the situation on this day with M. Subasić. M. Subasić said that he had not seen King Peter for a fortnight. Although he had asked for an audience, the King had said that he first wanted to see Mr. Churchill. Mr. Churchill explained to M. Subasić that our only immediate interest in Yugoslavia was to see that the German troops there were cut off and harried as much as possible. Our long-term interests demanded a united and stable Yugoslavia but it was completely indifferent to us whether the form of the State was republican or monarchical. M. Subasić said that the Communist Party, which was now at the head of affairs, was small and unlikely to hold power in a liberated Yugoslavia. The whole National Army of Liberation, and not only the Communists, had arms in their hands; Yugoslavia was a country of peasant proprietors, and there was no parallel with the Russia of 1918.
 - (d) The Prime Minister and Mr. Eden saw King Peter in the afternoon of January 9. The King gave the Prime Minister a letter which showed that he maintained his objections on constitutional grounds

¹ The communication to the United States Government included a hope that, if the King approved the agreement, the United States and British Ambassadors would go as soon as possible to Belgrade and do their best to ensure that the agreement was carried out fairly.

(a) R353/130/92. (b) WM(45)2.6, C.A.; R733/130/92. (c) R628/130/92. (d) R1092/130/92.

to the agreement. The Prime Minister repeated Mr. Eden's argument that there had been a successful revolution in Yugoslavia, and that constitutional obligations were not relevant to the main issue. The War Cabinet thought that the King would be making a great mistake if he refused to accept the proposed arrangement which preserved the theme of the monarchy. The Prime Minister once more advised the King to approve the agreement and to wait until the situation cleared up in Yugoslavia. A time might come when Marshal Tito would have much more need of the monarchy. In any case, the King's refusal would result in the establishment of a revolutionary government in Yugoslavia. The King could attempt to return to Yugoslavia, but he would have no chance of governing the country. There would certainly be civil war in which the King might be killed. For military reasons we had to continue to support Marshal Tito. We should not intervene by force in favour of the King. Mr. Churchill explained that the position in Greece was different from that in Yugoslavia. He also pointed out that the revolutionary movement in Yugoslavia had agreed to accept a regency owing to our pressure on the Soviet Government. Mr. Churchill had always found Stalin a man of his word; he now expected him, after accepting the agreement, to co-operate in seeing that it was properly carried out. The three Great Powers at their next meeting might agree to recommend the holding of elections and plebiscites under their supervision in the liberated countries; they would not use their strength to preserve the monarchy in any country.

The King's main constitutional objections to the agreement were that he was not allowed to choose the Regents and that the Anti-Fascist National Council was to exercise legislative powers until a Constituent Assembly had been elected and had completed its work. Mr. Churchill's answer to these objections was that, as a constitutional monarch, the King must appoint Regents on the advice of his Ministers and not on his own responsibility, and that M. Subasić had already said that he proposed to work for the enlargement of the National Council by the admission of duly elected members of (a) the last Yugoslav Parliament, and to secure that all legislative acts of the Council were subsequently ratified by the Constituent Assembly. The Prime Minister asked the King to come quickly to a decision.

On January 10, however, the King wrote to Mr. Churchill (b) maintaining his objections about the legislative powers of the Council and insisting that the Regents should be responsible to himself. He made matters worse by deciding to issue a communiqué to the press on January 11 giving his views on the agreement. He (c)

(a) R1093/130/92. (b) R1130/130/92. (c) R1131/130/92.

took this decision without consulting M. Subasić¹ or the Prime Minister or Mr. Eden, and apparently on the advice of his mother-in-law, Princess Aspasia of Greece. The Foreign Office heard about this communiqué on the morning of January 11 just before it was to be issued in London. They were able to hold it up, but meanwhile King Peter had given a copy of it to two American press correspondents. Mr. Eden saw the King in the afternoon of January 11, and spoke very strongly about his action. The King, however, was not to be persuaded, and insisted that he must give the declaration to the British press, though he made a slight verbal change in the text.

- (a) Later on January 11 Mr. Eden explained to the War Cabinet what had happened. The War Cabinet agreed that we could take no responsibility for the King's ill-considered action. We wanted, however, if possible, to maintain the Tito-Subasić agreement and in particular the provisions in it for free elections. It was also most desirable that we should let Marshal Tito and the Soviet Government know that the King had acted without consulting us, and indeed against our advice. We should therefore telegraph at once to Stalin that we regarded the King's action, taken without consulting his Prime Minister, as not binding; that we should be prepared to support Marshal Tito and M. Subasić in setting up a government on the basis of the agreement, and that we should assume the King's approval, recognise the new Government as the Royal Government of Yugoslavia and exchange Ambassadors with it.
- (b) The Prime Minister telegraphed accordingly to Stalin on the night of January 11-12. He also told Stalin that we must put the matter to the United States Government, but that we were not bound to accept their views. The Prime Minister telegraphed at the same time to Marshal Tito asking him to do nothing until he had
- (c) received a further message which we should send to him after consultation with the Soviet Government.
- M. Subasić now tried to find a way to get over the King's objections to the agreement. In the hope that these efforts would succeed the Prime Minister telegraphed again to Stalin suggesting that we should postpone our action in order to allow M. Subasić time to persuade the King. Stalin, however, had already replied that he
- (e) agreed with the proposals in the Prime Minister's first message.
- (f) He sent a second message on January 16 that he saw no reason for

¹ King Peter had not fulfilled his promise to see M. Subasić after his (the King's) interview with the Prime Minister.

(a) WM(45)4.2, C.A. (b) T79/5 (Churchill Papers/513; R1094/130/92). (c) T80/5 (Churchill Papers/513; R1094/130/92). (d) T91/5 (Churchill Papers/513; R1139/130/92). (e) T92/5 (Churchill Papers/513; R1138/130/92). (f) T109/5 (Churchill Papers/513; R1363/130/92.)

postponement. The Prime Minister answered that M. Subasić and (a) his Cabinet were doing their best to rally the King to his constitutional duty¹ and thus to save the agreement, and that it would be better to wait a little longer.

King Peter, however, refused advice. He sent a private message (b) to Marshal Tito suggesting an early meeting with him. Mr. Eden had already warned the King that this suggestion would probably be rejected.² Marshal Tito in fact refused to have any direct dealings (c) with the King, and urged M. Subasić and his Government to go at once to Belgrade. On January 21, at the Prime Minister's instructions, Mr. Stevenson asked for an audience with the King in order (d) to warn him that unless he accepted at once the agreement with such modifications as M. Subasić could authorise on his own responsibility and without further negotiation with Marshal Tito, the British Government would ask M. Subasić and his Government to go to Belgrade and would recognise the Regency set up under the agreement. The King was to be given forty-eight hours within which to come to a decision.

King Peter refused to see Mr. Stevenson on the pretext that he had an engagement with the King of Norway. Mr. Eden therefore instructed Mr. Stevenson not to make any further move in the matter; the warning was therefore not delivered. King Peter had sent earlier a formal protest against a statement by the Prime (e) Minister on January 18 in the House of Commons that we intended to support the agreement and recognise the Government set up under it.

The War Cabinet discussed the situation again on January 22. (f) They thought that, unless we acted quickly, King Peter might add to his difficulties by dismissing M. Subasić, or that Stalin or Marshal Tito might lose patience and denounce the agreement. From our point of view, while we had no control over the course of events in Roumania or Bulgaria, we still had some influence in Yugoslavia; it was not worth while risking the loss of such influence, if the King remained obdurate, merely to obtain the support of the United States. On the other hand, there were obvious advantages in carrying the United States with us. The War Cabinet therefore decided to delay for another forty-eight hours in the hope that by that time we should have had American support for our proposal to act without King Peter's assent.

¹ The Foreign Office had proposed to say 'rescue the King from the consequences of his folly'. The Prime Minister seems to have suggested the milder phrase.

² Mr. Eden had persuaded the King on January 11 to omit from the later versions of his communiqué an even more unwise proposal that he (the King) should go to see Stalin.

(a) T111/5 (Churchill Papers/513; R1363/130/92). (b) R1196, 1669, 1731/130/92. (c) R1668/130/92. (d) R1468, 1669/130/92. (e) R1973/130/92. (f) WM(45)7.4, C.A.; R1830/130/92.

- (a) On the night of January 22–3 King Peter dismissed M. Subasić and his Government. The Foreign Office did not know on January 23 whether the King intended to try to form another Government. They telegraphed to Washington and Moscow that we should continue to recognise M. Subasić's Government, and that we proposed, in spite of the King's decision, to see that the agreement was implemented. For this purpose we should move to Belgrade the Government and all other Yugoslav politicians who wished to go with them. We regarded immediate action as essential in order to avoid the risk of trouble in Yugoslavia by adherents of the old régime who might be counting on disagreement among the Great Powers. We therefore suggested an immediate declaration by the three Powers of the intention to put the agreement into force, and a statement to Marshal Tito that, if he collaborated with M. Subasić and his Government in carrying out the terms, these Powers would recognise the United Government thus formed and would accredit Ambassadors to the Regency.
- (b) Stalin replied on January 25 that he agreed with the Prime Minister's plan. There was, however, further delay while M. Subasić who refused to accept the dismissal of himself and his Government,
- (c) continued to negotiate with the King.¹ On January 27 the Prime Minister telegraphed to Stalin that we proposed that, whether dismissed or not, M. Subasić and his Government should go to Belgrade as early as possible in the following week and, with Marshal Tito, appoint a Regency. The Prime Minister suggested that he and Stalin and President Roosevelt should discuss details or further developments at their forthcoming meeting. Meanwhile he suggested that Stalin might be of help in persuading the United States Government to accept the plan.
- (d) After long delay the United States Government at last agreed to recognise the agreement and the United Yugoslav Government if the latter issued a declaration that it had been set up for the transitional period pending the holding of free elections in Yugoslavia for the expression of the national will.
- (e) At the Yalta Conference Mr. Eden suggested that Stalin might ask Marshal Tito to give assurances (i) that the National Council would be enlarged to include members of the last Yugoslav Parliament who had not compromised themselves by collaboration with the enemy; the enlarged Council would then form a body which could be called a temporary Parliament; (ii) that legislative acts

¹ The King agreed to an arrangement on January 29 whereby the Ministers should resign, and be reappointed at once to carry out the agreement.

(a) R1811, 1832/130/92. (b) T140/5 (Churchill Papers/513; R2150/130/92). (c) T144/5 (Churchill Papers/513; R2197/130/92). (d) R2208/130/92. (e) R2342/130/92. (f) WP(45)157; R2999, 3000, 3049, 3055/130/92.

passed by the Council would be subject to ratification by a Constituent Assembly; (iii) that the Government formed under the agreement would be only temporary, pending the free expression of the will of the people.

These points were brought forward partly to meet the King's objections, and partly to satisfy the United States Government. M. Molotov, however, objected to them on the ground that they would constitute an amendment to the agreement and therefore cause delay. Mr. Eden pointed out that the proposals would have the effect of strengthening the democratic character of the régime in Yugoslavia, and that they could be introduced outside the agreement. If the Soviet Government would recommend them to Marshal Tito, the British Government would be willing to put the agreement into force at once.

At the plenary session of the Conference on February 10 Stalin wished to link up Mr. Eden's request with a settlement of the Polish question. The Prime Minister refused this proposal. Stalin later accepted our first two requirements but thought that any statement about them should be made after the agreement had been given effect and a united Government had been formed. Stalin objected to the third point in the proposed statement on the ground that it would appear humiliating to the Yugoslav Government.

Finally, on February 10, the three Heads of Governments agreed to recommend that the agreement should be carried out at once, and that as soon as the new Government had been formed, it should issue a declaration covering the first two of Mr. Eden's points. Mr. Stevenson communicated this recommendation to M. Subasić on February 11, and Brigadier Maclean communicated it to Marshal Tito on the following day. M. Subasić and Marshal Tito accepted the recommendations, and the departure of the Minister's from London to Belgrade was fixed for February 15.

At the beginning of March, after somewhat difficult negotiations, (a) M. Subasić and Marshal Tito reached agreement on the composition of the Regency Council and the United Yugoslav Government. King Peter still hesitated to accept the joint proposals, but finally (b) accepted them after strong British pressure. The Prime Minister had suggested to Mr. Eden that the King should be told that further (c) obstruction on his part would result in a request from the British Government that he should leave the country.

The Regency Council took the oath in Belgrade on March 4, and the formation of the Government was announced two days later. (d) On March 14 the British Embassy in Belgrade was reopened.

(a) R4035/130/92. (b) R4343/130/92. (c) R4342/130/92. (d) R7268/130/92.

(v)

British relations with Marshal Tito after the signature of the Tito-Subasić agreement: Marshal Tito's visit to Moscow: Yugoslav rejection of the Allied proposals for Venezia Giulia (March 10–May 9, 1945).

- The acceptance of the Tito-Subasić agreement did not make any
- (a) easier the relations between Marshal Tito and the British Government. Marshal Tito had been increasing the scale of his demands for military supplies. The Prime Minister was inclined to think that these demands should be refused in view of the Marshal's unwillingness to co-operate with the British forces and his general tendency to exaggerate the assistance which he was receiving from the Russians and to say nothing about British support, and even to encourage anti-British feeling. Field-Marshal Alexander was therefore asked to report on Marshal Tito's requests before agreeing to them in order that the Foreign Office might have an opportunity of examining the political implication of acceptance or refusal. On March 10 the
- (b) Prime Minister wrote a minute to Mr. Eden that he was coming to the conclusion that our rôle in Yugoslavia must become one of increasing detachment. We should gradually reduce our missions and leave off delivering weapons, advice and supplies.

The Prime Minister asked Mr. Eden for his opinion. Mr. Eden replied on March 18 that Mr. Churchill had now raised the wider question of our long-term policy towards Yugoslavia. This question was whether we should abandon some if not all of our present footholds in Yugoslav affairs and leave the Yugoslavs to themselves, or to Marshal Tito, or to Russian control.

After months of negotiations in which we had taken a major part, a united Government had been established in Belgrade, and our Ambassador had arrived there to sponsor and watch over the new régime. Furthermore, after some weeks of difficult discussions we had proposed to the Soviet Government that, as an extension of the 'fifty-fifty' agreement, we should be responsible for the post-war reconstruction of the Yugoslav navy and air force while the Russians should be responsible for the Yugoslav army. We were also discussing with the Soviet Government the question of Yugoslav-Bulgarian relations, and this discussion was in fact about the future rôle of Yugoslavia as a Balkan Power.

These outstanding commitments made it impossible for us to begin a gradual withdrawal from Yugoslav affairs. We could not suddenly reverse our policy. In any case such a reversal would be unwise. Our present policy was realistic and not over-ambitious.

(a) R3927, 3951, 4632, 5477/6/92. (b) R5969/6/92.

We recognised that Yugoslavia was outside, or, rather, on the edge of our major interests and had not the same long-term strategic and political importance for us as Greece or Italy. We based our policy on the 'fifty-fifty' agreement which in effect accepted Yugoslavia as a kind of neutral area between British and Russian zones of influence. Since a half-share of influence in Yugoslav affairs did not fall to us naturally, the 'fifty-fifty' agreement meant that we had to exert ourselves to counterbalance Russian influence which—without the agreement—would be overwhelming. The proposal for a division of responsibility for the Yugoslav armed forces was an important application of this general principle of making Yugoslavia as far as possible a neutral area and thus protecting our position in Greece, and, to a lesser extent, in Italy.

Yugoslavia was likely to become the most important and influential of the Balkan countries. If we abandoned all claim to give advice or to express our views on Yugoslav policy, we should lose one of the principal means of influencing Balkan affairs as a whole. Moreover, we could not easily explain our change of policy to the Americans. We had found it very difficult to get their support for our pro-Partisan policy. We could hardly tell them, at the moment when the Tito-Subasić agreement had been put into force, that after all Marshal Tito had not turned out as we had hoped, and that we had decided to drop out of Yugoslav affairs. There was in fact no one else whom we could support in Yugoslavia. Neither King Peter nor General Mihailović had sufficient following.

Marshal Tito had behaved ungratefully and ungraciously towards us; there was also a good deal of recent evidence of anti-British feeling among his subordinates. Mr. Eden had expected these developments; the only surprising thing was the considerable moderation which Marshal Tito had shown in setting up his new Government. Mr. Eden therefore thought that it was more than ever important for us to maintain our influence in Yugoslavia and to use it in trying to keep Marshal Tito on the right lines. We might be able to cut down military supplies to him, but from the political point of view we ought not to draw out and leave Yugoslavia to him and the Russians.

During the next two months the Foreign Office regarded this note to the Prime Minister as a definite statement of British policy. The Prime Minister did not reply with any objection to it, and the Foreign Office assumed that he accepted it. There was therefore once again a certain confusion in the discussions, since in fact the Prime Minister had not found time to read Mr. Eden's minute, and the Foreign Office only discovered this to be the case on May 1. By this time further developments had made it necessary to reconsider the British attitude towards Marshal Tito.

One of the first acts of the new Government was to put their (a) relations with the U.S.S.R. on a formal basis. Marshal Tito arrived in Moscow on April 5 at the head of a Yugoslav delegation and on April 11 signed a treaty of friendship and mutual assistance and post-war collaboration of twenty years' duration upon the model of the treaty already concluded between the U.S.S.R. and Czechoslovakia. Marshal Tito had left Belgrade suddenly, after his manner, without informing the British Ambassador of his plans. M. Vyshinsky, however, told Sir A. Clark Kerr on April 9 that the Yugoslav Government had asked for a treaty and that the Soviet Government were in favour of the proposal.

On his return to Belgrade at the end of April Marshal Tito told Mr. Stevenson that the treaty (and an economic agreement which he had also signed with the Soviet Union) did not imply an exclusive orientation of Yugoslav policy towards Russia, and that he hoped soon to approach his other great Allies with similar treaty proposals. Marshal Tito's general demeanour in Moscow, however, did not bear out his assurances about future policy. In an interview which he gave in Moscow to the *Red Star* he had made no reference to Great Britain or to British assistance and friendship, though he was profuse in his gratitude to Russia and even thanked Bulgaria. He was reported as saying that Yugoslavia would build a strong army after the war, and that he was certain that Istria and Trieste would become Yugoslav territory.

- (b) Mr. Eden, who was in Washington, telegraphed to the Prime Minister about this interview. Mr. Eden thought that we should now reconsider the question of continuing military supplies, and shut down on them as far as was possible if not entirely. The Prime (c) Minister replied that he never trusted Marshal Tito 'since he levanted from Vis', and that he fully agreed about cutting off supplies. The Foreign Office agreed with the proposal not to send any supplies or assistance above the amount required for the purpose of immediate operations. They did not, however, agree with another suggestion from the Prime Minister that we should disengage ourselves from our promise to re-equip the Yugoslav air force from British sources. In a draft reply the Foreign Office referred to Mr. Eden's minute of March 18 and emphasised the importance of maintaining our 'fifty-fifty' foothold in Yugoslavia notwithstanding the changed circumstances or the fact that Marshal Tito consistently 'played down' the important and indeed decisive air support which he had received from us. This draft was not sent to the Prime Minister. (d) The latter, however, telegraphed again to Mr. Eden on April 20

(a) R6227, 6463, 6650, 7401, 7704/2808/92.

(b) T510/5 (Churchill Papers/513; R7022/6/92). (c) T516/5 (Churchill Papers/513; R7022/6/92.) (d) T556/5 (Churchill Papers/513; R7281/6/92).

that we ought not to continue to 'throw away our substance in a losing game with Soviet Russia in Titoland'. We should maintain as one of our main themes the 'harmony of British, American and Italian interests about the Adriatic'.

Mr. Eden replied from San Francisco on April 30 that we were (a) in a dilemma over the question of re-equipping the Yugoslav air force. Mr. Eden agreed that we did not want to make serious sacrifices simply for the right to play a losing game. On the other hand he did not 'despair entirely of Yugoslavia'. He thought that in the long run 'the ties which had drawn her towards the British orbit in the past might begin to pull again'. We might therefore be wise to maintain our stake in the country, and we could now afford without undue sacrifice the material to equip the Yugoslav air force. Even if we could not obtain Soviet agreement to our contributing the whole re-equipment, we might try for fifty per cent. On May 2 the Prime Minister repeated—as a decision—that our supplies should 'dwindle and die' without another moment's delay. No new shipments of any sort were to be sent.

The Prime Minister's decision was influenced by the fact that the Yugoslav Government were obviously trying to 'rush' their territorial claims against Italy and Austria, and to face Great Britain and the United States with a *fait accompli*. Mr. Eden, at the Yalta Conference, submitted a note on February 10 to the Russian and American delegates in favour of the establishment of a commission to settle a line of demarcation in Venezia Giulia between the area to be subject to Allied Military Government and that to be controlled by the Yugoslavs. Neither delegation was prepared to give an immediate answer. The British Government then tried a direct approach to Marshal Tito. On February 21, 1945, Field-Marshal Alexander went to Belgrade to discuss with Marshal Tito, among (b) other matters, this urgent question of the dividing line between the Allied and Yugoslav forces in Venezia Giulia.¹ He told Marshal Tito that, when the British and American forces occupied Austria, he would have to control not only Trieste, but the lines of communication from Trieste into Austria. At first sight he expected to occupy the whole of the territory west of the 1939 frontier between Yugoslavia and Italy, and to establish Allied Military Government in the area. He explained that this occupation would be without prejudice to the final peace settlement. Marshal Tito agreed to the establishment of Allied Military Government if he were allowed to retain the civil administration which he had already set up; he was (c)

¹ I have not dealt in detail with this question. The issues are set out in Dr. C. R. S. Harris's volume on *Allied Military Administration of Italy, 1943-5* (H.M.S.O., 1958), Chapter XII. See also *Grand Strategy*, VI, 128-31.

(a) T693/5 (Churchill Papers/513; R7705/6/92). (b) R6506/65/92 (1946). (c) U1172/51/70; R4632/6/92.

willing to allow the Yugoslav civil authorities to be responsible to the Allied Military Government, but argued that unless they were allowed to function, there would be chaos in the areas in question. He also said that, if Field-Marshal Alexander's purpose was to protect his lines of communication, he need not occupy the Istrian peninsula. If, on the other hand, Field-Marshal Alexander wished to use the communications running through Ljubljana, he could do so, though they were well within the Yugoslav frontier. Field-Marshal Alexander said that his suggestions were purely exploratory and that, before coming to a decision, he would have to refer the whole question to the Combined Chiefs of Staff.

- (a) On March 14 the United States Government replied to Mr. Eden's note of February 10 that they were not in favour of a line of demarcation and preferred the plan (which Field-Marshal Alexander had put to the Combined Chiefs of Staff) for the establishment of Allied Military Government, with Yugoslav participation, over the whole of Venezia Giulia. The Soviet Government had not replied to the note of February 10.¹ Mr. Eden was unable to discuss the matter with the Americans or with M. Molotov at Washington or San Francisco. Meanwhile Field-Marshal Alexander had assumed that he had the verbal agreement of Marshal Tito to his (Field-Marshal Alexander's) control of Trieste and the lines of communication. It became increasingly clear, however, in April that Marshal Tito did not intend to meet the Allies' conditions, and that the Yugoslav forces were trying, without regard to the general plan of Allied military operations, to occupy for themselves as large a part of the province as they could secure. They also made a formal request on April 2 to be allowed a zone of occupation in Austria. The Russians supported this request. The British Government opposed it on the grounds that it was an infringement of the four-Power principle, and that, since Marshal Tito was putting forward claims for Austrian territory, he would not be an unprejudiced participant in the occupation. The officially-inspired Yugoslav press carried on throughout this time an intense propaganda campaign about the 'unshakeable determination' of the Yugoslav peoples to incorporate Istria, Trieste and the Slovene coastal land in their country; any attempt to frustrate these aims would be 'brought to naught by the might of the new Yugoslavia'.
- (c) In view of the rapid Allied advance, Field-Marshal Alexander proposed on April 26 a partial occupation of Venezia Giulia. On April 26 the Combined Chiefs of Staff instructed him to set up

¹ There is no evidence in the Foreign Office archives that any reply was received to the note.

(a) U1973/51/70. (b) R8235, 8323/6/92. (c) U3167/51/70; U3628/3628/70.

military government over the whole of Venezia Giulia (including Fiume, but excluding the province of Zara) and in the area around Tarvisio. If the Yugoslavs refused to withdraw from the areas, Field-Marshal Alexander was to consult the Combined Chiefs of Staff before taking further action.

On May 2 a New Zealand division accepted the surrender of the German commander of the Trieste area and moved into it only to find Yugoslav forces in process of occupying most of the city of Trieste. These forces extended their occupation as far as, and, in certain places, beyond the Isonzo river. At the same time they entered the zone of Austria, i.e. Carinthia and Styria, which had been allocated to British administration, including Klagenfurt and much of the frontier area of Carinthia.¹ The Yugoslav Government obviously did not intend to withdraw these forces. A Yugoslav communiqué of May 3 stated that Allied forces had entered Trieste and Gorizia without Yugoslav permission, and that their action might have 'undesirable consequences' unless a settlement were reached by mutual agreement.

The Yugoslavs carried out in Venezia Giulia, and especially in Trieste, executions and widespread deportations among the Italian population. These measures were directed as much against Italians likely to oppose the annexation of the areas to Yugoslavia as against former Fascists. The Yugoslav forces also began 'requisitioning', on a scale amounting to the removal of all forms of property, both in Venezia Giulia and in Austria. The result was that relations between British and American troops and the Yugoslav forces became extremely tense.

In any case the British and United States Governments were committed to the principle that territorial changes should await the Peace Conference. Hence they could not allow the Yugoslav Government to seize the areas to which they were putting forward claims. The Prime Minister telegraphed to Field-Marshal Alexander on (a) May 6 that our line with Marshal Tito should be that the fate of all the territories would be settled at the Peace Conference, and that meanwhile 'peace and goodwill should reign on all contacted fronts'.² The Prime Minister thought that it was not much use arguing with Marshal Tito. He did not believe that Marshal Tito, even with Russian backing, would attempt to attack the Allied (b) forces. On the other hand, if the Allied Commander-in-Chief found it impossible to get the Marshal to agree to a satisfactory working

¹ The Yugoslav forces arrived in Klagenfurt three hours after the arrival of the British forces.

² The Foreign Office repeated this telegram to Mr. Eden at San Francisco.

(a) T787/5 (Churchill Papers/495; R8016/6/92). (b) T791/5 (Churchill Papers/495; R8017/6/92).

- arrangement, the British and United States Governments would have to take up the matter. Field-Marshal Alexander sent his Chief of Staff, General Sir W. D. Morgan, to Belgrade to discuss a working
- (a) arrangement with Marshal Tito. General Morgan gave Marshal Tito on May 8 the draft of an agreement providing for the establishment of Allied Military Government in Trieste and the western half of Venezia Giulia. The Agreement did not include Pola in the Allied governmental area, though the port of Pola and the anchorages on the west coast of Istria between Pola and Trieste were to be open to unrestricted use by Allied naval forces. The terms provided that the Supreme Allied Military Commander should use as his agents any Yugoslav civil administration which he might find to be working satisfactorily.
- (b) On this same day (May 8) the United States Ambassador at Belgrade communicated a note to the Yugoslav Government that provisional arrangements for military lines of demarcation should be without prejudice to the final disposal of the areas in question at a later date in the peace settlement or in negotiations between the Yugoslav and Italian Governments.¹
- (c) The Foreign Office instructed Mr. Stevenson to make a communication in similar terms to the Yugoslav Government. Marshal Tito, however, refused General Morgan's draft agreement. He said that, as the Yugoslavs had conquered the territory in question and proposed to claim it—and more—at the peace settlement, they
- (d) should be allowed to occupy it. The Foreign Office now considered that we should find out at once whether the Americans would give us military support if we decided to use force to turn out the Yugoslavs.

American support was politically and militarily essential, but hitherto the Foreign Office had had no information about Mr.

- (e) Truman's intentions other than in a message of April 30 to the Prime Minister stating that the President wished to avoid the use of American forces in combat in the Balkan political arena. Mr. Truman was likely to suggest taking the matter up again with Stalin. In the Foreign Office view at this time the only effect of such action would be to reveal in all its crudity that the dispute with Marshal Tito was a clash between the Western Powers and the Soviet Government. Meanwhile the Italian Government protested to the British and United States Governments against the situation in Trieste. They called attention to a Yugoslav announcement of the formation of a

¹ The United States Government had previously been opposed to any proposals for demarcation of areas. See above p. 367.

(a) R8053/6/92. (b) R8045/6/92. (c) R8054, 8063, 8197/6/92. (d) R8066, 8262/6/92. (e) T703/5, No. 18, Churchill Papers/495.

National Slovene Federal Government at Trieste and to the nomination of a Yugoslav General Officer as Governor of the city. They stated that they might have to resign if the Allies did not fulfil their pledge to set up an Allied Military Government. Trieste was an issue upon which all Italians were united, and no Italian ministry could abandon it.

(vi)

British insistence upon the Yugoslav withdrawal from Austria: Anglo-American demands to Marshal Tito with regard to Venezia Giulia: final acceptance of the Anglo-American demands (May 10–June 9, 1945): failure of Marshal Tito to carry out the Tito-Subasić agreement.

On May 12 President Truman sent a personal message to the Prime Minister that, in his view, we had to decide whether we would uphold the fundamental principle of territorial settlement by orderly process against force, intimidation or blackmail. The question was not one of taking sides between Yugoslavia and Italy, but of deciding whether the United States and Great Britain would allow their Allies to engage in uncontrolled land-grabbing or tactics all too reminiscent of those of Hitler and Japan. A Yugoslav occupation of Trieste—which was a vital outlet for large areas of Central Europe—would have consequences involving far more than the actual territory. President Truman thought that we should insist on complete and exclusive control of Trieste and Pola and the line of communication through Gorizia and Monfalcone and sufficient territory to the east to allow proper administrative control. We should therefore send a communication to Marshal Tito, and also inform Stalin in accordance with the Yalta agreement for consultation.

The Prime Minister replied on May 12 that he agreed entirely with the President, and would work with all his strength on the lines proposed. If we handled the matter firmly before our strength was dispersed, we could prevent a critical situation in Europe. Otherwise we ran the risk of throwing away all the fruits of our victory, and of failing to secure the purpose of our world organisation to prevent territorial aggression and future wars. Mr. Churchill hoped that, at all events for a few weeks, a standstill order could be given to movements from Europe of the American armies and air force.

The President had included in his telegram a draft message to Marshal Tito. Mr. Churchill accepted the draft almost unchanged. The draft stated that the question of Venezia Giulia was only one of the many territorial problems in Europe to be solved in the general

(a) T891/5, No. 34 (Churchill Papers/495; R8323/6/92). (b) T899/5, No. 45 (Churchill Papers/495; R8324/6/92).

peace settlement. The Allied Governments had solemnly repudiated the doctrine of solution by conquest and the unilateral proclamation of sovereignty by occupation—the method used by the enemy with such tragic consequences. The agreement to work together for an orderly and just solution of territorial problems was one of the main principles for which the peoples of the United Nations had made such sacrifices and upon which they were now at work to build a system of world security. The plan for an Allied Military Government in Venezia Giulia was adopted precisely for the purpose of achieving a peaceful and lasting solution of an admittedly complex problem. The plan safeguarded the interests of the peoples concerned and did not prejudice Yugoslav claims at the Peace Conference. The United States Government therefore asked for the immediate agreement of the Yugoslav Government to the control by the Allied Supreme Commander in the Mediterranean of the area including Trieste, Gorizia, Monfalcone, and Pola, and sufficient territory to the east to allow proper administrative control, and to the issue of orders to the Yugoslav forces in their area to co-operate in the establishment of Allied Military Government.

- (a) The Prime Minister told the War Cabinet on May 13 that he understood that the President had sent his message after consulting the United States Chiefs of Staff, and that his intention was that British and American troops should move in to the area concerned and occupy it by force if Marshal Tito refused to withdraw. The Prime Minister had therefore replied to the President at once that he agreed with his proposals. He had suggested that the President should ask the United States Ambassador at Belgrade to make a communication to Marshal Tito, and that Mr. Stevenson should support it.

- During the discussion in the War Cabinet the Prime Minister said that it was necessary to reaffirm the principle that all territorial claims should be left to be determined at the peace settlement and not be prejudged by the unilateral establishment of sovereignty through military occupation. We should take a firm stand on this question of principle before the Anglo-American forces in Europe had been substantially reduced. For this reason Mr. Churchill, (b) in an earlier telegram of May 12 to the President, had referred to the prominence given by the press to reports of the movements of American troops from Europe. Mr. Churchill had suggested a 'standstill' at any rate for a few weeks, and had undertaken that on our side we would hold up our demobilisation plans. This proposal might delay our own re-deployment to the Far East, with the consequent postponement of operations planned for South-East

(a) WM(45)60, C.A.; R8933/6/92. (b) T895/5, No. 44, Churchill Papers/495.

Asia. We might also have to delay our plans for beginning demobilisation six weeks after the end of hostilities in Europe. On the other hand Mr. Churchill thought that, if we and the United States Government took a firm line over the situation in Venezia Giulia and in southern Austria, we should not have to use force, and the situation might be cleared up quickly enough to make it unnecessary for us to change any of our plans.

The War Cabinet also considered President Truman's suggestion that Stalin should be informed of the position. They regarded it as important that this information should reach him from us before he heard from Marshal Tito.¹ The Prime Minister agreed to send to the President the draft of a message to be given to Stalin when the British Ambassador and the United States Chargé d'Affaires were communicating to him the text of the telegram to Marshal Tito. He also agreed with the War Cabinet that we should tell the Dominion Governments of the position and invite the Governments of South Africa and New Zealand to agree that their troops now under Field-Marshal Alexander's command should remain at his disposal for the purpose of any military operations if in the last resort we had to compel the Yugoslav forces to withdraw from southern Austria and western Venezia Giulia.

The message to Stalin stated that a serious situation had arisen (a) in the Italian province of Venezia Giulia. It had always been recognised that the future of this province, which was acquired by Italy after the first World War, would have to be decided at the Peace Conference, since its population was largely Yugoslav and only partly Italian. Until the peace settlement, the province should be placed under the military government of Field-Marshal Alexander, who would occupy and administer it on behalf of all the United Nations. Mr. Churchill then explained the situation caused by Marshal Tito's insistence on extending his own military government as far as the river Isonzo, while merely offering Field-Marshal Alexander facilities for communicating with Austria through Trieste. The British Government could not agree to such an arrangement, since 'Yugoslav occupation and administration of the whole province would be in contradiction with the principle which we seek to maintain that the fate of the province must not be decided by conquest and by one-sided establishment of sovereignty by military occupation'. In view of the 'unhelpful attitude adopted by Marshal Tito' Field-Marshal Alexander had referred the matter to the British and United States Governments. These Governments had

¹ The Foreign Office (and the War Cabinet), although in favour of informing Stalin about the position, still regarded an appeal to him as undesirable. See also p. 376, note 1.

(a) T939A/5, Churchill Papers/495.

decided to make a communication to Marshal Tito (then followed the text of the communication) and, in view of the serious issues at stake, to inform the Soviet Government of their action.¹

- (a) Mr. Stevenson had already been instructed on May 10 to ask for the immediate withdrawal of Yugoslav troops from the Austrian provinces of Styria and Carinthia. Mr. Churchill had asked the
- (b) President for American support in this demand and, on May 14,
- (c) the President replied that he had sent the necessary instructions to the United States Ambassador. Mr. Stevenson gave Marshal Tito a note on May 12 formally requesting the withdrawal of Yugoslav troops from Austria. Marshal Tito replied on the following day with a request that the troops should be allowed to remain under British
- (d) command. The Prime Minister, who remained confident that firm action would not lead to fighting,² refused to accept this compromise. Mr. Stevenson was therefore instructed to renew the demand for immediate withdrawal, and to say that the British Government could not accept the Yugoslav demand for a zone of occupation in
- (e) Austria. Mr. Stevenson carried out these instructions on May 17.
- (f) On May 19 Marshal Tito replied that he had given orders for withdrawal. The Yugoslav forces began shortly afterwards to move southwards and, by the end of May, had almost completed their withdrawal.

- The critical phase of the dispute over Venezia Giulia lasted for a longer time. The British and United States Ambassadors presented
- (g) identical notes to Marshal Tito on May 15 in the terms of the draft proposed by President Truman. Two days later Marshal Tito answered with a note expressing surprise and indignation, but not
 - (h) accepting the Allied requirements. Meanwhile President Truman had replied to the Prime Minister on May 14 that unless Marshal Tito's forces actually attacked, he could not involve the United States 'in another war', and that he thought it better to see what happened before giving a standstill order.
 - (i) On May 14 the President also told Mr. Eden and Mr. Attlee (who were in Washington on their way home from the San Francisco Conference) that he wanted to await the outcome of the joint

¹ The United States Chargé d'Affaires at Moscow was instructed to tell M. Molotov that President Truman supported the Prime Minister's message.

² The Prime Minister summed up his view in a minute of May 13 to the Foreign Office:
 (j) 'Once they recoil, they are beat. Principles prevail. It is easy to tell them later that all their grabs are in the soup at the Peace Table.'

(a) R8129/6/92. (b) T908/5, No. 47 (Churchill Papers/495; R8354/6/92). (c) T923/5, No. 38 (Churchill Papers/495; R8354/6/92). (d) R8405/6/92. (e) R8712/6/92. (f) R8778/6/92. (g) R9315/6/92. (h) T922/4, No. 37 (Churchill Papers/495; R8495/6/92). (i) R8526/6/92. (j) R8355/6/92.

representations at Belgrade before finally committing himself. Mr. Churchill replied to President Truman on May 15 that he agreed (a) about waiting for Marshal Tito's answer, but that he was not clear what the President meant by the term 'attack'. He assumed that a persistent refusal to withdraw Yugoslav troops would constitute an 'attack'.

The President replied on the night of May 16-17 that he meant (b) definitely that he was 'unable and unwilling to involve [the United States] in a war with the Yugoslavs' unless they 'attacked'. In the latter case we should be 'justified in using our Allied forces to throw them back to a distance that would preclude further attack on our troops'.

The Foreign Office regarded this message as disappointing. The State Department had suggested that, in the event of a refusal from Marshal Tito, the two Governments should withdraw their Ambassadors from Belgrade. The Foreign Office considered that a mere gesture of this kind would be useless, and that, if in the last resort we did not use force, we should appear before the world as having attempted, and failed to carry off, a policy of bluff.

The Prime Minister therefore sent a message to President Truman (c) on May 19 that he did not expect war with Yugoslavia and that, short of war, he did not consider that our Ambassadors should be withdrawn. 'It is at critical junctures that Ambassadors should be on the spot.' Marshal Tito's answer had been received, and was completely negative. We could not just do nothing. We must prevent any danger to our troops; for instance what were we to do if the Yugoslavs took up a position surrounding a British or American unit?

The Prime Minister told the President that Field-Marshal Alexander had previously been willing to agree to the presence of Yugoslav troops if they were under his command. He had now reported that Yugoslav behaviour both in Austria and in Venezia Giulia was making a very unfavourable impression upon British and American troops who had to look on, without power to intervene, while actions offending their traditional sense of justice were taking place. We could not therefore accept any arrangement for sharing an area with Yugoslav troops or Partisans or in which Yugoslav administration was functioning. The Prime Minister told the President that he would not consider action by Field-Marshal Alexander to ensure the proper functioning of his Military Government as constituting 'a war with the Yugoslavs'.

President Truman replied on May 21 that he agreed that we (d)

(a) T928/5, No. 51 (Churchill Papers/495; R8528/6/92). (b) T954/5, No. 42 (Churchill Papers/495; R8624/6/92). (c) T968/5, No. 52 (Churchill Papers/495; R8809/6/92). (d) T980/5, No. 44 (Churchill Papers/495; R8952/6/92).

could not leave matters as they stood. We ought to reject Marshal Tito's answer, and arrange that Field-Marshal Alexander, with assistance from General Eisenhower, reinforced his front-line troops to such an extent that the Yugoslavs would realise the firmness of our intentions and our preponderance of force. The military commanders, however, should take the utmost care to ensure that any overt act of hostilities came from Marshal Tito's side. The President doubted whether, if there were any fighting, it could be considered in terms of frontier incidents. He also said that he was most anxious to avoid interference with the redeployment of United States troops to the Pacific.

- (a) President Truman informed the Prime Minister on May 21 of the text of a second telegram which he had sent to Stalin summarising the view of the United States Government that Marshal Tito's reply was unsatisfactory and that the question was one of principle upon which no compromise was possible. Mr. Truman said that he hoped that we could 'count upon [Stalin's] influence also to assist in bringing about the provisional settlement' outlined in the communication of May 15 to Marshal Tito.¹
- (b) The Prime Minister replied on the night of May 21-2 that he agreed with the President's proposals with regard to the instructions to the military commanders and with his message to Stalin. He would ask the British Ambassador to support the message or, if the President so desired, he would send a separate message. He thought it desirable to add that we should not deal with the Yugoslav claims apart from other territorial claims, since all outstanding questions concerning the frontiers of Europe ought to be settled at the 'Peace Table' and in relation to Europe as a whole.

The Prime Minister told the President that he regarded a meeting of the three Great Powers as urgent. There would probably be a general election in Great Britain in June, but as all parties were agreed on foreign policy, a postponement of the meeting would be unnecessary. The Prime Minister asked the President to suggest a date and place in order that they might approach Stalin. He was afraid that Stalin would play for time in order to remain all-powerful in Europe after the British and American forces had melted away.

- (c) The President replied at once that he would be glad of British support for his message; he thought that this support would be as

¹ The Foreign Office regarded this appeal to Stalin as unwise, and considered that it gave him an opportunity (which he used in his reply of May 23) to support the Yugoslav claims.

(a) T979/5, No. 43 (Churchill Papers/495; R8951/6/92). (b) T982/5, No. 53 (Churchill Papers/495; R8953/6/92). (c) T983/5, No. 45 (Churchill Papers/495; R8954/6/92).

effective as a separate but similar message from the Prime Minister. The President also said that within the next two weeks he hoped to make definite proposals for a meeting of the three Powers. The Foreign Office therefore instructed Sir A. Clark Kerr to inform M. (a) Molotov of our full agreement with the President's message, and to add the Prime Minister's point that we did not intend to settle Yugoslav territorial claims separately or in advance of the Peace Conference.

On the night of May 23-4 Stalin sent to the Prime Minister a (b) copy of his reply to President Truman's message. In this reply Stalin agreed that the matter was one of principle, but he obviously supported what he called the 'legitimate claims' of Yugoslavia. He said that the immediate question was one of temporary military occupation, and that, since the Yugoslav forces had expelled the Germans from the territory of Istria-Trieste, it would be unjust and an undeserved insult to them to refuse them the right to occupy it. Stalin therefore proposed that these forces and the Yugoslav administration should remain, and that a line of demarcation should be defined by mutual agreement between Field-Marshal Alexander and Marshal Tito.

Meanwhile Marshal Tito had proposed on May 21 a compromise (c) more or less on the lines suggested in Stalin's reply. He was willing to agree to Allied Military Government in the area originally proposed by Field-Marshal Alexander,¹ subject to minor modifications of the proposed demarcation line, on condition that (i) representatives of the Yugoslav Army should take part in the military administration of the area, (ii) units of the Yugoslav army should remain in the area under the command of Field-Marshal Alexander, and (iii) the Allied governmental authorities should act in the area through the civil authorities already established by the Yugoslav forces.

As the Prime Minister had pointed out to President Truman, it was clear that any combined administration would be impracticable. Lord Halifax was instructed on the night of May 22-3 to tell the (d) United States Government that in our view we should refuse negotiation except on the terms of our note of May 15 in which we had included Pola as within the area of Allied Military Government. We should exclude Yugoslav administration from the area, and admit Yugoslav military units only to an extent to which Field-Marshal Alexander might agree. Lord Halifax was also asked to point out that we should be handing over the eastern part of Venezia

¹ This area did not include Pola.

(a) R8954/6/92. (b) T990/5 (Churchill Papers/495; R9076/6/92). (c) R8852, 9315/6/92. (d) R8853/6/92.

Giulia to Yugoslav military occupation and civil administration, and should safeguard the principle that the ultimate fate of the whole province must be reserved for the peace settlement. We ought therefore to require Marshal Tito to subscribe to a statement that his present occupation of eastern Venezia Giulia did not mean that we recognised its annexation to Yugoslavia.

- (a) Field-Marshal Alexander's view was that he would not agree to the participation of Yugoslav military officers in the Allied Military Government, but that he would not object to the presence of a small mission as 'observers' at the headquarters of the Eighth Army. He would permit a detachment of Yugoslav regular troops not exceeding 2,000 to occupy, under his orders, an area selected by himself west of the demarcation line, but he could not agree that the Allied Military Government should be pledged to act through the Yugoslav civil authorities since he wanted to be free to decide according to local conditions on the administration of any particular area. Field-Marshal Alexander also required that the Yugoslav authorities should return all non-Yugoslavs whom they had arrested in the area or deported from it, and that they should make restitution for property confiscated or removed.¹
- (b) On May 24 the Foreign Office instructed Lord Halifax to propose to the United States Government that we should present to Marshal Tito the terms of a draft agreement on the lines suggested by Field-Marshal Alexander. The United States Government approved of the draft, with certain modifications. The Foreign Office then raised the question of the steps to be taken in the event of Marshal Tito refusing the terms. With Field-Marshal Alexander's approval, they proposed that nothing should be said to Marshal Tito when the terms were presented to him, but that if he did not reply within three days, or sent an unfavourable reply, Field-Marshal Alexander should be instructed to complete the occupation in force of such an area of Venezia Giulia as he considered necessary for the protection of his lines of communication and his military government. Lord Halifax was instructed to ask the State Department whether they agreed with this procedure.
- (c) The Prime Minister sent a message to President Truman on June 2 saying that the news from Yugoslavia was not good, and that the Yugoslavs were threatening force. The Prime Minister thought that, for the sake of the future, we should not be deterred by any threats. He then repeated the proposal made through Lord Halifax

¹ Field-Marshal Alexander did not wish to include Pola in his area of occupation. See above, p. 376.

(a) R9029/6/92. (b) R9154, 9155, 9235, 9295/6/92. (c) T1039/5, No. 64 (Churchill Papers/495; R9514/6/92).

that, unless we had a satisfactory answer from Marshal Tito within three days, our Ambassadors should tell Marshal Tito that Field-Marshal Alexander was taking matters into his own hands. The Prime Minister thought it important that the Russians had so far remained quiet. He added:

'If we once let it be thought that there is no point beyond which we cannot be pushed about, there will be no future for Europe except another war more terrible than anything that the world has yet seen. But by showing a firm front in circumstances and in a locality which are favourable to us, we may reach a satisfactory and solid foundation for peace and justice.'

The Prime Minister said that the military operation would be 'sharp and short'. He did not think that we should get through the matter by bluff. He hoped therefore that the President would act in the spirit of his message of May 12. Otherwise we might suffer a humiliation which would be fatal to the causes which the President wanted to uphold.

On June 2 Mr. Stevenson and the United States Ambassador (a) presented a note to the Deputy Prime Minister of Yugoslavia (in Marshal Tito's absence) containing the draft agreement.¹ The Ambassadors made it clear that there could be no bargaining over the terms. There was, however, still no definite agreement between the British and United States Governments on the action to be taken if Marshal Tito refused the terms. On the night of June 2-3 Lord Halifax reported that the State Department had decided not to (b) send further instructions to the United States Ambassador in Belgrade or to decide upon their final attitude until they knew Marshal Tito's reaction to the joint *démarche* of June 2. Lord Halifax thought it likely that, if the reply from Marshal Tito were unsatisfactory, they would agree with our proposal merely to inform the Yugoslav Government that Field-Marshal Alexander would take the necessary steps to secure his requirements.

The Foreign Office regarded the American attitude as too weak. On the night of June 4-5 Lord Halifax was instructed to ask how long the State Department proposed to wait for Marshal Tito's answer. The Yugoslav civil administration was establishing itself more firmly in Trieste and other disputed districts, and every day's

¹ On May 29 President Truman sent to Stalin a message outlining the general conditions upon which the two Governments considered it necessary to insist, and stating that the United States Chargé d'Affaires would give him (Stalin) details of the agreement which (c) was being proposed to Marshal Tito. In accordance with the suggestion made by Lord Halifax to the United States Government, this message was only informative and did not contain an appeal for Stalin's support.

(a) R9513/6/92. (b) R9543/6/92. (c) Churchill Papers/495; R9714/6/92.

delay meant that more Italians were being deported into Yugoslavia. It was surely essential to decide at once how long we were going to wait, and what would be our next step.

- Within the next few days, however, there was sufficient evidence
- (a) that Marshal Tito was not going to reject the agreement. He postponed the signature until June 9, but from this time the Yugoslav troops began slowly to withdraw from the area of Allied Military Government laid down in the agreement. On June 20 a further military agreement was signed to regulate details left outstanding in the earlier document.
- (b) On signing the agreement the Yugoslav Government communicated a note to the Ambassadors repeating their territorial claims and giving an assurance that during their occupation of the area in dispute they had not carried out any confiscation of property or deportations except on grounds of military security, and that such measures had been directed only against persons known to be 'prominent Fascists or war criminals'. The value of this assertion was more than doubtful.

- The detailed agreement was not reached without another somewhat sharp telegram from Stalin. In this message of June 21 to the Prime Minister Stalin complained that the negotiations seemed to have reached a deadlock. He blamed Field-Marshal Alexander for refusing to take account even of the minimum wishes of the Yugoslavs who had liberated the territory in dispute, and formed a majority of the population. He objected also to the language used by Field-Marshal Alexander in comparing Marshal Tito's behaviour with that of Hitler and Mussolini.

The Prime Minister proposed to send an equally sharp answer that we had accepted a fifty-fifty arrangement with the Russians over Yugoslavia, and that in practice the proportion was ninety—ten, and even so Marshal Tito was strongly resisting our ten per cent. The Yugoslavs had inflicted great cruelties on the Italians, especially in Trieste and Fiume, and had tried to grasp all the territory into which their light forces had penetrated. The movement of these light forces could not have been made if the Russians had not advanced from the east and in the north, and if Field-Marshal Alexander had not held down twenty-seven enemy divisions in Italy, and finally reduced them to surrender. Marshal Tito had thus not conquered the territory. It had been conquered by the movements of much larger armies in the west and east which had compelled the Germans to withdraw from the Balkans. At all events we had reached an agreement which we proposed to enforce. Since

(a) R9769, 9816/6/92. (b) R9932/6/92. (c) T1176/5 (Churchill Papers/49510; R10694/6/92).

any permanent territorial settlement would have to be settled at the Peace Table, Marshal Tito was not prejudicing his position by an acceptance of the line we had laid down. We could discuss the whole question at the forthcoming meeting in Berlin. The Prime Minister added that 'a Russianised frontier running from Lübeck through Eisenach to Trieste and down to Albania is a matter which requires a very great deal of argument conducted between good friends'.

The Prime Minister also pointed out that the language which Field-Marshal Alexander had used about Marshal Tito had been taken largely from President Truman's message of May 12 to himself, and that he saw no reason to make excuses for him.

The Foreign Office suggested to the Prime Minister (i) that Stalin's telegram had been sent before he knew that a subsidiary agreement had been reached, and on the assumption that the negotiations had broken down; (ii) that Stalin had not seen the text of President Truman's message of May 12; (iii) that Field-Marshal Alexander had not used the comparison to which Stalin objected in a message to Marshal Tito but in a message to his own commanders in order to explain to their troops why it might be necessary to take action against the Yugoslavs.

The Prime Minister decided not to use his original draft, but to send only a short message to the effect that, as a settlement had been (a) reached at Belgrade, the matter could be discussed later at the Berlin meeting, and that Field-Marshal Alexander was entirely well-disposed both to Russia and to Marshal Tito. This message was telegraphed on June 25. Stalin replied on July 6 that he had (b) no objection to a discussion of the question at the Berlin meeting.¹

The British proposal at the Potsdam Conference that the Yugoslav Government should be reminded of their unfulfilled obligations was partly the result of suggestions from M. Subasić himself. M. Subasić thought that a three-Power declaration might help him in maintaining his position in Belgrade. The Foreign Office had also felt that Marshal Tito needed some warning. It could hardly be expected that, after four years of enemy occupation and civil war, the work of reconstruction would be easy or that a liberal régime on western models could be introduced at once. Nevertheless, as the months passed, there had been little improvement in the administration of justice, and little relaxation in the censorship of opinion. M. Subasić's efforts to secure protection for the ordinary citizen against arbitrary

¹ For the discussion of Yugoslav affairs at the Potsdam Conference, see Volume V, Chapter LXIX, section (v).

(a) T1192/5 (Churchill Papers/495; R10888/6/92). (b) T1232/5 (Churchill Papers/495; R11595/6/92).

punishment were resisted by the Partisan members of the Government. Meanwhile, our own 'fifty-fifty' arrangement with the Russians was being entirely disregarded.

- (a) At the end of April, 1945, King Peter had written a letter to Mr. Churchill complaining of the foreign and domestic policy of the new Government and their failure to re-establish ordinary democratic rights. Mr. Churchill found it difficult to send any answer other than an admission that our hopes and plans had not been fulfilled. He sent a draft of a proposed reply (submitted to him from the Prime Minister's office) to the Foreign Office. The draft ended:

'I do not claim that the result [of British support to the liberation of Yugoslavia] has been as satisfactory as we could have wished or that the great efforts we have expended on behalf of the Yugoslav people have been acknowledged by the present Government of Yugoslavia as we had the right to expect. I can only express my regret to Your Majesty that it has not been in my power to alter the course of events.'

The Foreign Office thought these words were too 'complaining' in tone. They suggested a new phrasing:

'We have indeed done everything in our power to influence evolution in Yugoslavia in the manner which we thought right. But I cannot conceal from Your Majesty that events have so far disappointed my best hopes and that there is much which is happening in Yugoslavia that I regret but am unable to prevent.'

- (b) The Prime Minister accepted this wording in the reply which he sent on May 8.
- (c) The position was unchanged in August 1945. In the view of the Foreign Office the Yugoslav Government was not a true fusion of the former Royal Cabinet and Marshal Tito's *de facto* administration. The state was run by Marshal Tito and his Partisans. Their régime was totalitarian, and not democratic in the western sense of the term. The administration, as in the Soviet Union, was carried out by a series of superimposed committees, nominated—in spite of the pretence of election—by the central authority. Political activity was limited to the National Liberation Front and the press was merely the expression of the Government. No adverse criticism was allowed, and a secret police, with unlimited powers of arrest and detention without trial, enforced uniformity. Marshal Tito had said that he would never agree to the return of the monarchy
- (d) because it was incompatible with the new régime. Yugoslavia was thus in effect a Soviet satellite.

(a) R7606/6/92. (b) Churchill Papers/513. (c) R13445/6/92. (d) R13568/130/92.

CHAPTER XLIII

British policy towards Greece, April 1941–August 1945

(i)

The Greek constitutional question: the rise of E.A.M. and E.L.A.S.: divergence of policy between the Foreign Office and S.O.E.: Major Wallace's report on the situation in Greece (April 1941–August 1943).

IN the case of Greece as of Yugoslavia the British Government began by supporting an exiled king and his Government in the expectation or at least the hope that they would be received back after the war and that any demands for constitutional change—and such demands were likely—would be met in an orderly way through the normal procedure of free elections. It is difficult to suppose that British policy could have been based on any other assumption at the time when the Yugoslav and Greek Governments were driven from their respective countries, but in fact such a policy of moderation and common sense assumed a higher level of political education and restraint than was the case in the predominantly peasant countries of Yugoslavia and Greece. Moreover, in both countries the political régime before the war was neither democratic nor popular. The exiled Governments were now cut off from opinion in their own countries and, especially after the German attack on Russia, the most active leaders of underground resistance to the enemy came from the political groups, and particularly from the Communists, who had already been driven underground by the dictatorial methods of their own pre-war governments. It followed that if, on military grounds, British support were given to these more active political groups, the chances of success for the policy of support for the exiled sovereigns and governments were thereby lessened. The Foreign Office pointed out this fact again and again in the case of Yugoslavia. If the Greek left-wing parties had produced a leader as powerful as Marshal Tito, the history of British policy towards Greece might have ended, as in Yugoslavia, in an unwilling acceptance of a Communist régime imposed by the usual Communist methods on a population which was, for the most part, non-Communist. On the other hand it might also be argued that, if Belgrade had been as accessible as Athens to a small British force of occupation, the course of events in Yugoslavia might have been different. At all events, as things were, the British Government were able, and indeed compelled, in Greece to carry through their policy to the end. They had to use force in order to reach this end, but there is no doubt

that the majority of the Greek nation welcomed their interference and that this interference prevented a more devastating civil war and allowed the Greeks a freedom which they would not otherwise have had to choose a government for themselves.

- (a) The evidence of a deep division between the Greek people and their exiled King and Government was neither unexpected nor long in coming. The King and his Government, after leaving the mainland of Greece on April 23, 1941, had moved to Crete. They were driven from Crete before the end of May by the German occupation of the island. They went to Egypt, and thence, at the end of June, to South Africa, since it was impracticable at that time to send them to England by the Mediterranean route. They left Cape Town on August 26 and reached England on September 22, 1941.

A month after their arrival in England the King and his Government issued a Constitutional Act declaring that the Metaxas régime was at an end, and that the constitutional rights of Greeks were restored. This action was taken, on the advice of the British Government, largely to satisfy public opinion. The death of General Metaxas on January 29, 1941, had in fact meant the end of his régime, since there was no other Greek capable of exercising his authority, but there was widespread suspicion that the King and his Ministers intended to continue the dictatorship.

The policy of the British Government in upholding the King and his Government was also to ensure that they in turn satisfied Greek opinion about their intentions. On November 25, 1941, Mr. Eden gave M. Tsouderos, the Greek Prime Minister, an *aide-mémoire* reaffirming the desire of the British Government for co-operation and their hope that, at the end of the war, the King would be welcomed back to Greece. The *aide-mémoire* referred to the importance of avoiding political disturbances and to the establishment of a liberal and representative constitution which would secure good and stable administration.

- (b) The constitutional issue was brought to a critical point early in January 1942, when an emissary reached Cairo from General Gonatas, a prominent Republican politician in Greece, with a letter stating that the Greek people would not accept the return of the King or the Government of M. Tsouderos, even with assurances that the King would abandon his support of a dictatorship and become a constitutional monarch. On January 15 the substance of General Gonatas's letter was communicated to M. Tsouderos in London with the suggestion that the General's emissary should be told clearly what the Greek Government had already said and done with regard to the establishment, subject to the approval of the people, of a free, constitutional régime in Greece.

(a) R1362/112/19 (1942). (b) R1362/112/19.

M. Tsouderos agreed that the emissary should be given a message to take back to Greece, as a statement of fact, that the King and Government did not intend to reimpose a dictatorship. It was therefore arranged that M. Tsouderos should write a letter to Mr. Eden setting out the policy of his Government, and that this letter should be sent into Greece by the Minister of State in Cairo with a covering letter expressing the views of the British Government.

M. Tsouderos stated in his letter that he had made it clear to Mr. Eden that he regarded the dictatorship of General Metaxas as a personal régime which had come to an end with the latter's death. M. Tsouderos and his colleagues were not exercising dictatorial authority and did not intend to continue the internal policy of the Metaxas régime. The fact that they were carrying on the work of the Government without a Parliament was due solely to the necessity imposed on them by the enemy occupation of the country. They regarded the Constitution of 1911 (i.e. the constitution in force before General Metaxas's dictatorship) as valid for the time, but they considered that, after the war, a free and democratic constitution under the King should be established, subject to popular approval, in harmony with the new social and political conditions. M. Tsouderos's Government would therefore hand over the administration to a new government soon after the conclusion of peace.

The covering letter explained that the British Government welcomed M. Tsouderos's statement, and were giving their full support to the King and to his Government, which they recognised as the legal government of Greece. They hoped that the King would be welcomed back at the end of the war and that the Greek people would accept the policy put forward by M. Tsouderos. The British Government also hoped that the Government would be strengthened by other Greeks coming from occupied Greece, that nothing would be said or done to weaken the unity of the nation, and that all Greeks, whatever their personal political opinions, would support the King and Government for the prosecution of the war and the liberation of their country, and would not take up positions in respect to political questions which could be settled only after the liberation.

On February 4, 1942, in order to leave no room for doubt about his position, the King signed a further Constitutional Act declaring invalid General Metaxas's decree of August 4, 1936, which had suspended the main provisions of the 1911 Constitution.¹

In spite of the obvious difficulties, there was at this time some

¹ The constitution of 1911 was a revision of that of 1864 under which Prince George of Denmark became King George of Greece. This constitution of 1911 was set aside by the Republicans in 1927 and brought into force again with the restoration of the monarchy in 1935. In 1936, at General Metaxas' request, the King suspended illegally, by decree, eight articles of the constitution of 1911.

reason to hope that the British policy of reconciliation might succeed. At all events the Germans had failed to secure any collaborators of real importance in Greece. The Germans set up a puppet Government under General Tsolakoglu (who had signed the Greek capitulation in Albania) within a few days of their occupation of the country. This Government was composed mainly of anti-Venizelist officers and professors.¹ The puppet government had little authority; the Greek people as a whole remained pro-British, and, after their own experience of dictatorship, unlikely to be taken in by Axis phrases about national unity. Moreover the Germans and Italians made no effort to deal with the severe famine in Greece (which was normally a grain-importing country) during the winter of 1941-2.² In any case the area of effective enemy occupation in Greece was limited to the coastal areas, the few large towns—Athens, with the Piraeus, and Salonika were the only towns which could properly be designated as cities—and the main line of communication from Attica to the north and the Greco-Turkish frontier. The Germans and Italians made little attempt, except by occasional raids, to control the central region from Florina to the Parnassus range. This area, and to a lesser extent parts of the Peloponnese, therefore gave ample opportunity for the organisation of the guerrilla bands which in Greece as in Serbia had been associated with the traditional resistance to the Turks and the war of liberation. Unfortunately the geographical factors which made it impossible for the enemy to control the mountain areas also isolated the bands from one another. Even if united action had been less difficult, the fierce individualism of Greek politics and the deep divisions of party before and during the Metaxas régime were not favourable to co-operation.

From the latter part of 1942 the guerrilla bands consisted of two main groups known from the initial letters of their names as E.L.A.S. and E.D.E.S. E.L.A.S. was the military counterpart of a political organisation named E.A.M.³ This controlling body claimed to be a federation of left-wing parties. In fact, it was mainly a 'cover' for

¹ The feud between Venizelists and anti-Venizelists went back to the First World War when M. Venizelos formed an anti-German Government at Salonika in defiance of the pro-German policy of King Constantine. The dictatorship of General Metaxas was supported by most, though not all, anti-Venizelists.

General Tsolakoglu was succeeded in December 1942, by M. Logothetopoulos, the Rector of Athens University. After the latter's resignation in April 1943, his place was taken by M. Rallis, a professional politician.

² The famine was due to German and Italian requisitioning and the cutting off of imports by the blockade. The decision of the War Cabinet in January, 1942, to allow the import of wheat was the one substantial break, for relief purposes, in the blockade during the war. The food situation was relieved in the summer of 1942 by the import of Red Cross supplies. The Axis authorities, in their own interest, allowed this importation. For the history of Greek relief, see W. N. Medicott, *The Economic Blockade* (H.M.S.O., 1959), Chap. IX.

³ E.L.A.S.—'National People's Liberation Army'. E.D.E.S.—'National Democratic People's Army'. E.A.M.—'National Liberation Front'. E.A.M. was formed in September 1941, E.L.A.S. in April 1942.

the executive of the Greek Communist Party (K.K.E.). The Communist Party in Greece was small, though its programme had an attraction for the landless agricultural labourers as well as for the poorer classes in the towns. The party had been suppressed under General Metaxas's régime and therefore already had an underground organisation. The Communists had at first supported the national resistance to the Italians; in January 1941, they received orders from Moscow to denounce this resistance as 'Fascist aggression' and to encourage military desertion. The order was not generally obeyed or even circulated. Hence it was easier for the party to turn round after the German attack on Russia. Furthermore in the confusion of the spring of 1941 most of the imprisoned Communists had escaped.¹ They formed a tough nucleus for E.A.M. and E.L.A.S.; their programme was at first set out in moderate terms, but the non-Communists who had been attracted to them as the earliest resistance organisation with a popular appeal soon observed with anxiety that the leaders were manoeuvring themselves into a position for setting up a Communist dictatorship after the war. As they widened their area of control, they began to use terrorist methods among the population in their areas.²

E.D.E.S. was strongly anti-Communist. It was a much smaller organisation than E.L.A.S.; its numbers were about 5,000, and were concentrated in Epirus. Their nominal head was General Plastiras, the most respected Greek soldier, and an exile in France;³ their actual commander, Colonel (later General) Zervas, was a shrewd and popular figure who won respect for himself as a fighting leader. Colonel Zervas was pro-British, though he regarded the support given by the British authorities to E.A.M. and E.L.A.S. as a menace both to British interests and to the future peace of Greece.⁴ His own political affiliations were democratic and radical, and not, as such, favourable to the return of the monarchy.

¹ Zachariades, the leader of the party, however, was unable to escape, and was sent by the Germans to Dachau. His place as leader was taken by G. Siantos who had been trained in Russia before 1936, and interned by General Metaxas. He had escaped in 1938, and had been arrested by the Italians from whom again he managed to escape. Siantos was born (1890) in Thessaly of poor parents. There were probably not more than about fifty Russian-trained Communists in the E.A.M.-E.L.A.S. organisation, but in view of their skill in concealed and indirect control and of the absence of any united non-Communist opposition among the E.L.A.S. rank and file, this small minority was able to dominate the movement and establish 'reliable' persons at all key points.

² One of the most important E.L.A.S. leaders, known under the name of 'Ares Velouhiotis', was a man of very considerable military ability, but a debased sadistic type. 'Ares' was a Communist, of middle class family, and well educated. He had been imprisoned by General Metaxas but had escaped in 1941. See also p. 437, note 1.

³ General Plastiras had been one of the two leaders who had set up a revolutionary government in 1922 and forced the abdication of King Constantine. He had been in exile since 1933.

⁴ There was only one other guerrilla organisation of any importance, the so-called E.K.K.A., under Colonel Psarros, an officer of distinction. Politically, E.K.K.A. was very close to E.D.E.S., and hostile to E.A.M.-E.L.A.S. E.K.K.A. was violently attacked by E.L.A.S. twice in 1943, and finally destroyed by them in the spring of 1944.

E.L.A.S. and E.D.E.S. had made early contact with the British military authorities. British officers were sent in the summer of 1942 to get in touch with them for the organisation of sabotage, with the special purpose of hampering German communications through Greece to North Africa. One important sabotage operation against the Gorgopotamus railway viaduct south of Lamia was carried out on November 26, 1942; although it was effected too late to coincide with the offensive at El Alamein, it cut the German supply route for three weeks. After the German retreat from Libya the supply route through Greece and Crete ceased to be of much importance to them, but the British military authorities continued to regard the Greek guerrillas as of value in occupying enemy forces. In the late summer of 1943 the British authorities asked for large-scale sabotage in Greece, and spread rumours of an Allied landing in order to divert German reinforcements from Italy.

The British liaison officers were instructed to support all the guerrilla bands, irrespective of their political complexion. The senior officer and head of the S.O.E. organisation in Greece, Brigadier Myers, tried to coordinate their activities on the basis that E.D.E.S. should continue to work to the west, and E.L.A.S. to the east of the Pindus range, but this arrangement gave the most important areas to E.L.A.S. E.L.A.S., in fact, obtained most of the British support; the support consisted mainly of money and of automatic weapons. E.L.A.S. used both for eliminating rivals and extending the area of their control.

- The developments in Greece, therefore, during the latter part of 1942, did not promise well for the re-establishment of a Liberal, or 'central' parliamentary régime under a constitutional monarchy.
- (a) Meanwhile the British Government were committed officially by their public declarations to the support of King George and his Government as the legitimate Government of Greece. The King and Government on their side had declared, with British approval, that they were not exercising dictatorial authority and did not intend to do so; that they were acting as trustees of the Greek people, and would leave them free, after the liberation of the country, to decide upon their future régime. The British view was that a constitutional monarchy would best serve the needs of Greece and, from past experience, was more likely than a republican régime to produce a stable government. The British Government, however, had no intention of restoring the monarchy by force.

There could be no doubt that the King, owing to his association with the dictatorship, was regarded with dislike and suspicion by a large section of the population. The Government in exile was rejected

(a) R6880/88/19 (1942); R2466/1/19 (1943); R4337/1/19.

by the Communists and other left-wing groups in the country because it was a royal Government, while the small number of royalists—consisting largely of former army officers—distrusted it because it was not, in their view, firm enough in its support of the monarchy. The professional politicians in Athens were also unwilling to commit themselves to it because they were uncertain of its future. On the other hand the resistance groups in Greece itself, though divided among themselves, were not favourable to the King's return. E.D.E.S. might accept it, but the stronger E.A.M.—E.L.A.S. combination had plans which would certainly lead to civil war after the liberation, and which were already alarming moderate opinion.

If the policy advocated by the Foreign Office were to succeed, it was essential to convince the Greeks that the King and his Government were sincere about their intentions, and also to promote unity among the various groups and parties in the homeland. To this end the Foreign Office tried to get suitable politicians and senior officials to come out of Greece in order to join the Government and make it really representative of Greek opinion. The Foreign Office also thought it desirable to send the King and M. Tsouderos to Cairo, where they would be in easier contact with Greeks from the occupied territories, and with the Greek contingent—some 22,000 officers and men—with the Allied armies. The question of a move was raised (a) with M. Tsouderos in January 1943, and in April 1943, the King and his Government left England for Cairo.

As in the case of Yugoslavia, however, there was a conflict between the long-term and short-term policy of the British Government. On short-term military considerations there were good reasons for supporting the resistance groups which were doing, or appeared likely to do, most damage to the enemy, and for giving this support irrespective of political consequences. Thus the considerations which led the military authorities to support Marshal Tito rather than General Mihailović worked in favour of supporting E.L.A.S. and the opposition to the King and Government in Greece, and turning a blind eye to their immediate high-handedness against their fellow-countrymen and to the grave possibilities of civil war in Greece if an organisation under Communist leadership were left in armed control of the country at the time of liberation.

The Foreign Office were aware of this conflict of policy, but the difficulty of resolving it was greatly increased owing to the semi-independent position of the British military and political organisation, Special Operations Executive, dealing with the support of

(a) R734/1/19.

resistance movements, the inevitable secrecy with which this organisation conducted its work, and the support which it received from the military authorities in the Middle East.¹

- (a) Before the move of the King and his Government to Cairo the Foreign Office had come to the conclusion that it would be disastrous to leave matters in their present state in which S.O.E., contrary to the policy sanctioned by the War Cabinet, were actually fomenting and assisting—by gifts of arms and money—the opposition to the King and Government. In these circumstances there could be no cause for surprise at the failure of the methods adopted by the Foreign Office to put into effect the policy of uniting opinion inside Greece in support of the King and his Government. One method adopted hitherto by the Foreign Office had been to try to build up a so-called Action Committee, which represented secretly in Athens the Greek Government in exile, as a centre of unity for all the resistance groups and political parties. The Committee, however, was practically without influence. The Minister of State in Cairo even proposed that it should be disbanded—on the ground that it was too much to the Right in Greek politics—and that S.O.E. should be used as the sole channel of communication with Greece.

The Foreign Office therefore considered whether we should employ more vigorous methods in order to impose our policy of support for the Tsouderos Government and the King, or whether we should withdraw our support from them, and attempt to form a new Government from among Left-wing supporters. There was little doubt that for the present we had to choose the former alternative. In this case the Foreign Office could not but feel it necessary to ask for a temporary suspension of S.O.E. activities in Greece. If we accepted the Minister of State's proposal, the gulf between official policy in London and the acts of the S.O.E. in Greece would be widened. Even from the point of view of strategy it was questionable whether we should allow S.O.E. to continue their operations in Greece. Our strategic objectives were to interfere with the communications of the Axis Powers in Greece, disorganise their administration and undermine their control, and ensure that when we landed troops for the liberation of Greece and the Axis forces were withdrawn, the country would not lapse into chaos and civil war. For this purpose we must be able to establish a strong Government at the earliest possible moment in the country. Unfortunately there was

¹ The record of events in Greece is told in this chapter from the Foreign Office point of view, and does not include reference to S.O.E. documents which might put the case for the latter's policy against the very strong criticisms made by the Foreign Office—including the criticism that S.O.E. withheld from the Foreign Office important information about the internal developments in Greece.

(a) R1908/1/19.

no means of reconciling these two objectives, since the first required that we should work through, and therefore strengthen the anti-Government forces in Greece.

The Foreign Office regarded the build-up of a strong Greek Government as far more important than the ephemeral damage which could be done by acts of sabotage at a time when we could not directly threaten the Axis position in Greece. It was, however, possible that the proposed change of method would be of no avail, and that we could not bridge the divergencies between the King and Government and the Greek people. Should we then on our arrival in Greece insist on the King and Government remaining in power until we thought it safe for them to carry out their promises about consulting the nation with regard to the future of the régime, or should we set up an *ad hoc* Government of our own?

The Foreign Office considered that before making a direct approach to S.O.E. they should ask for the views of the Chiefs of Staff. Mr. Eden, therefore, on March 9,¹ summarised the Foreign Office views in a minute to the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister agreed that the Chiefs of Staff should be consulted. Their view was (a) that the S.O.E. operations in Greece were of great importance, and that no political considerations should hamper or reduce the good work being done by the guerrilla bands. All that the Foreign Office succeeded in obtaining, therefore, was the despatch of instructions to the Minister of State in Cairo stating that British policy was one of full support of the King and his Government on the broadest democratic basis, and that this support was to be made clear in all our contacts in Greece and in our propaganda. We required a strong administration in Greece as soon as the liberation of the country had taken place. Hence we did not want to encourage the idea that a plebiscite on the future régime should be held immediately after the country had been liberated. We approved of the intention of the present Government to resign on its return to Greece in order to enable the King to form an administration more fully representative of opinion; in other words, we should agree to the holding of elections, but not to an attempt to raise the issue of the future of the monarchy. We realised that the King and Government might not be able to resume control peacefully unless more active steps were taken now to strengthen their position in Greece. Hence it was necessary on all possible occasions to show to the Greek people, whose fundamental friendliness to Great Britain was an important asset, that the King and Government had our support.

¹ Mr. Eden was about to leave for Washington.

(a) R2466/1/19.

The instructions then pointed out that up to the present S.O.E., while no doubt doing their best in contacts with resistance groups to promote the policy of support for the King and Government, had naturally gravitated towards contacts with groups opposed to one or both of them. In view of the operational importance attached to subversive activities in Greece, there could be no question of S.O.E. refusing to have dealings with any group merely because its political sentiments were opposed to the King and Government but, subject to special operational necessity, S.O.E. should always turn towards the groups willing to support the King and Government, and should impress on any anti-monarchical groups the facts of British policy.

It seemed probable that E.A.M. had planned to use the E.L.A.S. bands for a Communist *coup d'état* in the spring of 1943 on the expectation that the Russian armies would soon reach the Balkans. They attacked all the other guerrilla bands in their propaganda, and would have suppressed E.D.E.S. by force if they had been strong enough to do so. They actually succeeded, for a time, in disarming E.K.K.A.

The violent methods and extremist aims of E.A.M. caused a reaction against them. The leaders themselves realised that they had made a mistake, and that the Allied forces in the Middle East and not the Red Army were likely to liberate Greece. For this reason E.A.M. were more than willing to accept the proposals made by the British military authorities in March 1943, for an agreement with E.D.E.S. and E.K.K.A. which was put to the leaders by Brigadier Myers. This proposal gave E.A.M. the chance of rehabilitating themselves, both with the Greek people and with the British authorities upon whom they depended for supplies.

The National Bands Agreement, which was signed in July 1943, was thus, from the E.A.M. point of view, mainly a tactical move. They were now assured of British support, and of a continued supply of arms. They did not attempt to conceal their intention of using these arms to ensure 'the rule of the people' after the liberation of the country. It was also obvious—or should have been obvious—what the Communist directors of the organisation meant by 'the rule of the people'.

In August 1943, Brigadier Myers brought back with him to Cairo six representatives—four of them from E.A.M.—of the guerrilla bands. Their arrival was unexpected;¹ the reason why

¹ The messages sent to Mr. Leeper, British Ambassador to the Greek Government, with regard to their coming did not reach him.

E.A.M. agreed even to send them seems to have been that they realised that they were losing popular support and that they wanted to impress opinion in Greece by getting not only the recognition of the Cairo Government but a share in the Ministries. They asked, in fact, for the Ministries of War and of the Interior to be held by their representatives in Greece. M. Tsouderos refused these demands, and the delegates went home. Before they left, all six of them signed—with the support of two of M. Tsouderos's colleagues—a declaration against the return of the King before the holding of a free plebiscite.

This declaration was in effect a reply to a declaration broadcast (a) by the King on July 4, 1943, with the approval of the Foreign Office. The King promised that, as soon as the security of the country was complete, and the necessities of military operations allowed, free and general elections for a constituent assembly would be held. These elections would take place not later than six months after the liberation; meanwhile the constitution of 1911 would be maintained. As soon as the Government could return to Greece, the members would resign in order that a Government representative of all parties might be formed.

Mr. Eden said in the House of Commons on July 7 that the (b) British Government endorsed this announcement. Later, on August 31, the Prime Minister, in a message to the King, summed up the policy of the British Government towards his return as follows: 'We are all looking forward to your return to Greece at the head of your army and remaining there until the will of the Greek people is expressed under conditions of tranquillity.'¹

As a further step towards co-ordinating the actions of S.O.E. with

¹ The Foreign Office about this time had not envisaged the return of the King with the liberated forces; the general view was that in all the smaller Allied countries liberated by an Allied expeditionary force, the Commander-in-Chief of the force should be supreme in civil as well as military affairs; all normal functions of government would remain in suspense until the progress of military operations allowed the transfer of civil responsibilities to a restored Allied Government. The Greek Government had accepted this plan, but in discussing the matter at Cairo, the position of the King was raised with them—contrary to the intentions of the Foreign Office. The decision taken was that the King should be allowed to return at the outset with our forces, but in a purely military capacity. The Prime Minister in a minute of June 15 to Mr. Eden asked: 'Why should his [the King of Greece] kingship be called in question at this stage? He should go back as he left as King and General.' Mr. Eden replied that the reason for emphasising the King's position as Greek Commander-in-Chief was twofold: (a) In view of the undoubted anti-monarchist feeling in Greece we had to be careful to avoid giving the impression that we were reimposing the King on the Greek people by force. The mere fact of his return with our troops entailed this risk, but in the King's interests as well as our own we should reduce it to a minimum. (b) Since we were conducting the operations, the Commander-in-Chief of the expeditionary force should have authority to direct the civil administration. He could not do so if the King exercised his full sovereignty. Mr. Eden added that the King himself fully accepted our view. (c)

(a) R5586, 5764/414/19. (b) R8329/44/44. (c) R5552/4/19.

the official policy of the British Government which the Foreign Office were trying to carry out, Mr. D. J. Wallace¹ was appointed at the beginning of June a member of the S.O.E. mission in Greece, in the capacity of Political Adviser, and as such authorised to report to and receive guidance from the British Ambassador.

- (a) Major Wallace visited Greece from July 14 to August 9, 1943. On his return he wrote a long report on the situation. This report, which the Foreign Office regarded as an extremely able piece of work, began by describing the guerrilla organisations and pointing out the remarkable extent to which they dominated the country. German control was limited to the large towns and main lines of communication. Major Wallace considered that E.L.A.S.—with about 15,000 guerillas actually mobilised—had about three times the strength of E.D.E.S. Their leadership was 90 per cent Communist, and the organisation included Communist features such as the association of Political Commissars with the military commanders. The position of E.L.A.S., and its political direction E.A.M., was less strong than it appeared, since only about 10 per cent of the rank and file were Communist, and in many areas even under their exclusive control the civil population was strongly opposed to them. On the other hand, the central E.A.M. committee had a firm hold over the E.L.A.S. bands, and in each band the Communists controlled the rest of the members.

Major Wallace thought that E.A.M. had genuinely changed their policy, and wanted to collaborate with other organisations. This change of policy, however, was forced on them because they realised that they were not strong enough to destroy these other organisations and that the Greek people were not in favour of Communism. E.A.M. would give up their opportunist collaboration if they saw a chance of seizing power for themselves, for instance on the evacuation of Greece by the Axis forces.

E.D.E.S. was the second most powerful organisation. They were opposed to the monarchy but their leader, General Zervas, was so much convinced of the need for British support that he would accept any advice we might give, even including a recommendation that the King should return before a plebiscite had been held. The third organisation—E.K.K.A., under Colonel Psarros—had twice been broken up by E.L.A.S. but was reforming, and receiving arms for 1,000 men.

Major Wallace considered that the comparative stabilisation of the guerrilla bands secured by the recent agreement worked in

¹ Mr. Wallace, who was given the temporary rank of major, had been Press Attaché at His Majesty's Embassy, Athens.

(a) R8419/13/19.

favour of E.L.A.S. because it had been made at a time when they were numerically predominant. We had tied our hands by the agreement, and could not weaken E.A.M. and E.L.A.S. to an important extent unless we went back on our promises. We might, however, take a stiffer attitude towards E.A.M. and refuse minor concessions in our dealings with them. We might also allow a more rapid formation of other bands.

Major Wallace had no doubts about the unpopularity of the King. The King's declaration of July 4 had had little effect, and the propaganda against his return before the holding of a plebiscite had been almost universally successful. On the other hand, if we stated definitely that the King's declaration was the last word in the matter, and that there would be no opportunity of bargaining, we might get the politicians, who reckoned on our support against the Communists, to come out on the side of the King.

(ii)

Further discussions on British policy towards Greece: renewal of the civil war: Mr. Eden's memorandum of November 14, 1943: the Prime Minister's and Mr. Eden's visit to Cairo: Mr. Roosevelt's support of the King's opposition to the British proposals: the King's 'revised' letter of November 8, 1943.

Major Wallace and Brigadier Myers came to London for consultation in September. After discussions with them the Foreign Office decided that another statement of policy was necessary for the guidance of British officers in Greece. This statement was drawn up by the Foreign Office in the latter part of September. It differed little in its general conclusions, as far as concerned the British attitude towards the constitutional question, from the definition of policy laid down in the previous March.¹ The statement explained that we were pledged to give the King our full support as a loyal ally and as constitutional Head of the Greek State. The Greek people alone could deprive him of his authority, but were obviously unable to pronounce on the question until the country had been liberated, order restored, and elections or a plebiscite held under proper conditions.

Our support for the Greek Government in Cairo as the only properly constituted Government of Greece was based on similar considerations, but we wanted to remedy the unrepresentative character of this Government by encouraging leading personalities

¹ See above, pp. 391-2.

(a) R8960, 9917/4/19; R8993, 9739/414/19.

in Greece to go to Egypt to join it. If our policy were wholly successful we might be able to set up a fully representative Greek Government in Cairo which would take over control after the liberation of the country without serious risk of disorder or civil war. It seemed unlikely, however, that the politicians in Athens or the guerrilla leaders would secure sufficient unity among themselves or that they would agree to serve under the King; hence we might have to keep in being the existing unrepresentative Government until the liberation of the country. The politicians were insisting that the King should not return until after the holding of a plebiscite. They argued that otherwise the King would prevent republicans from expressing their opinions, but the King's past attitude did not justify this view.

The statement then dealt with our policy towards the guerrilla bands. If we allowed E.A.M. or any other body directly opposed to the régime and constitution to establish a monopoly of power, they would be in a position, on a German withdrawal, to set themselves up as a government. The Commander-in-Chief of our liberating forces would have to acquiesce in this action and co-operate with them although they would have no right to pose as representing the will of the people. We must not assume that because E.A.M.—E.L.A.S. served our purpose in attacking the enemy, and because in the present abnormal circumstances they were exercising great power, the mass of their countrymen would support them after the liberation of the country. If we allowed E.A.M.—E.L.A.S. to get beyond our control, we should be making ourselves responsible for setting up in Greece a dictatorship of a small clique of ruthless fanatics at the moment when we were claiming to liberate the country in the name of democracy, or we should be creating the conditions leading to a civil war between E.A.M.—E.L.A.S. and E.D.E.S. We had two strong assets in relation to E.A.M.: (i) their reliance on us for material support, and (ii) the pro-British feelings of the majority of the Greek people, and the consequent weakness of any party which did not have our approval and support. Nevertheless we could not expect to win over the Communist leaders of E.A.M. or, for the present, to detach the rank and file from their leadership. We ought to try to weaken E.A.M.—E.L.A.S. by building up the rival organisations as far as this was possible without losing the co-operation of E.A.M. to an extent likely to weaken the guerrilla effort.

In their statement the Foreign Office had envisaged primarily the liberation of the country by a British invading force. If, however, the Germans themselves withdrew, and the liberation of Greece took place without an invasion, the Foreign Office still regarded it as most important that a small British force should be sent at once

to Athens. The prestige which this force would enjoy and the fact that they would be regarded as an advance guard of larger forces would probably prevent any individual or group from challenging their authority by an attempt to seize power. We should thus gain time for the establishment of a representative government commanding the respect of the country. Such a government ought to be able to extend its own authority rapidly since it would be the channel through which vital relief supplies would be distributed.

The Chiefs of Staff, whom the Foreign Office consulted on the question, were uncertain whether, in view of other major operations, a British force would be available. Even if the Germans left Greece without fighting, a force of considerable size would be required to prevent a state of anarchy—especially if the King returned to Greece. In any case we should be setting a precedent for all Allied Governments to apply to us for British troops as soon as the liberation of their country became imminent.

On September 28 Mr. Eden put the views of the Foreign Office and those of the Chiefs of Staff to the Prime Minister. He said that, since we could count on the pro-British feeling of the population, we should need only a small force to keep the peace and ensure the orderly distribution of relief. Serious disturbances or civil war were likely only if one of the guerrilla organisations attempted to seize power and was forcibly opposed by a rival group. Even a small British force might be enough to deter the leaders from making such an attempt or their followers from supporting it. There was no reason to suppose that the return of the King would greatly increase the risk of trouble or that we were creating a difficult precedent for ourselves. On the other hand, if we did not maintain order after a German withdrawal the result would be widespread confusion and starvation with serious effects on our position elsewhere in the Balkans.

The Prime Minister, in a minute of September 29, agreed with Mr. Eden. He thought that, if the Germans evacuated Greece, we should certainly send into Athens 5,000 British troops with armoured cars and Bren-gun carriers. They would not need transport or artillery. Their duty would be to give support at the centre to the lawful Greek Government. The Greeks would not know how many were coming behind them. There might be 'some bickering between the Greek guerrilla bands, but great respect will be paid to the British more especially as the saving of the country from famine depends entirely on our exertions in the early months of liberation. The troops need not be organized to contend with more than rioting in the capital or incursion into the capital from the countryside.'

The Chiefs of Staff considered that they could provide 5,000 men. They asked the Foreign Office whether this number would be

sufficient. Sir O. Sargent replied on October 10 that it was impossible to lay down an exact figure. We could probably not find the numbers required to rule out all possibility of disorder. If, however, we established firm control over Athens and other principal towns evacuated by the Germans, any disturbance or fighting in the country would soon peter out. A force of two or three divisions would be ideal, but, since anything of the kind was out of the question, the figure suggested by the Prime Minister would be satisfactory.

At this time when the Foreign Office were considering the problem of avoiding serious disturbances in Greece after the liberation of the country something like civil war had already broken out. E.L.A.S. bands had used the occasion of the Italian collapse to disarm—against Allied orders—an Italian division which had come over to the Allies with the intention of fighting as co-belligerents against the Germans. With these and other arms from Italian sources E.L.A.S. now had a great superiority in equipment over their opponents. They used this chance not to attack the Germans but in an attempt to liquidate other bands and therefore to establish full political control by E.A.M. before the liberation which was now assumed to be close at hand. On October 8 they set upon E.D.E.S. They probably acted in collusion with the Germans, but in any case the latter were now able to regroup their forces and, in spite of the Italian surrender, to withdraw an armoured division from Greece, while the Greek guerrillas were engaged in civil war. The National Bands Agreement disappeared, and one British liaison officer was killed in an E.L.A.S. attack on his post.

General Wilson then made a broadcast denouncing the civil war, and threatening retribution later on if the persons responsible for the death of the British officer were not punished. The broadcast had no effect on E.A.M. or E.L.A.S. and all that the British military authorities could do was to cut off their supplies while continuing to send arms to E.D.E.S.

Mr. Eden was able to discuss the Greek question in Cairo on his way to and from the Moscow Conference. On November 14, 1943, (a) after his return to London, he submitted a memorandum to the War Cabinet in which he suggested certain important changes in policy. He thought that the loyalty of the Greek people to the British connexion was now severely strained. Our support of the King was unpopular. We had been unable to do anything directly to liberate Greece since the German occupation two and a half

(a) WP(43)518; R11828/414/19.

years ago; we had not exploited the capitulation of Italy as widely as the Greeks had expected. They were left to face another winter of enemy occupation, and were deeply concerned at our recognition of Italian co-belligerency. Even our support of the guerrillas might seem cynical and self-interested since it exposed the local populations to savage reprisals¹ without making any important contribution to the war.

We were now faced with a deliberate attack by E.A.M.—E.L.A.S. on the other Greek bands with a view to seizing control of the country after the withdrawal of the Germans. We ought therefore to consider, firstly, whether we should continue to support E.A.M.—E.L.A.S. who had already murdered one British liaison officer and maltreated others and were openly anti-British in their propaganda. It was most improbable that our continued support would secure genuine co-operation from E.A.M. or deter them from their principal aim of seizing power in Greece for themselves. The Greek Government were increasingly concerned about our association with E.A.M., and were likely to resign if we continued this support. We should be doing a great disservice to the Greek people by strengthening a gang of ruthless fanatics whose intention was to impose their own minority dictatorship. We should also be acting against our own interests since we did not want Greece to be governed after the war by leaders who would look not to us but to Moscow. In any case the E.L.A.S. bands were of little or no military value against the Germans since their leaders would not risk engagements which might cause them serious casualties and so weaken their position. Their main value was that they provided harbourage for the British officers who themselves carried out all the sabotage operations. We might hope to provide this cover by building up other bands.

If, as Mr. Eden advised, we adopted this latter policy and withdrew our support from E.A.M.—E.L.A.S., we could not do so now merely by withholding money and supplies; E.L.A.S. already had sufficient stocks of arms. We must rely very largely on propaganda for winning over and uniting the moderates who formed a large proportion of the rank and file of E.L.A.S. We could not launch a successful propaganda campaign without raising the constitutional question, and, especially, the issue of the King's return. The connexion of the King with the Metaxas régime and the abuse with

¹ In August 1943, the Germans announced that they would put fifty Greeks to death for every German who was killed by Greek action. They carried out this policy with their usual savagery. In the spring of 1944, after a German column had been ambushed, and some prisoners killed near Kalavryta, the Germans took all the women and children of the place into the church, and then set it on fire. A German soldier, disobeying orders, opened the church door, and most of the women and children escaped, but practically all the men were massacred. It has been estimated that about one quarter of the buildings in Greece were damaged or destroyed by the Germans.

which E.A.M. had attacked him for the past two years had turned at least 80 per cent of the Greek people against him. Our influence was therefore not strong enough to secure his return before the constitutional issue had been settled. We could neither unite the moderates nor break E.A.M. as long as the latter could say that we intended to force the King on the nation. Hence we must advise the King to give a public pledge not to return to Greece until the constitutional issue had been settled by a plebiscite or elections to a Constituent Assembly.

We could not recommend this action to the King unless we had done everything possible to safeguard his interests. The only effective safeguard would be for the King, at the moment of liberation, to nominate a Regency Council which would hold office until the Greek people had given their decision about the régime. The Archbishop Damaskinos of Athens¹ might well be a leading member of such a Council, and the King might authorise him, secretly, to appoint the Council at the right moment.²

- (a) The War Cabinet considered Mr. Eden's memorandum on November 16. Mr. Eden repeated his view that we should have to break with the leaders of E.A.M. and E.L.A.S.; otherwise the Greek Government would resign and the King would abdicate. The Chief of the General Staff, however, argued that E.A.M. and E.L.A.S. had taken an important part in interrupting communications and holding German divisions in the area east of the Pindus range. It would therefore be contrary to our military interests to break with them.

Mr. Eden said that there was a conflict of evidence on the matter. The latest information reaching the Foreign Office was that E.L.A.S. were doing little to fight the Germans and were engaged in fighting other Greeks. Field-Marshal Smuts, who attended the War Cabinet meeting, thought that the King might decide to abdicate if we asked him to act on the lines suggested in the memorandum. The War Cabinet agreed that we could not continue our present dual policy,

¹ Archbishop Damaskinos had been elected to the see of Athens under the Metaxas régime, but General Metaxas had refused to accept him. The Germans had installed him in place of the Metaxas candidate, but he had behaved with courage and independence towards them and had gained general public respect. E.L.A.S. were not anti-clerical, and the Greek church had remained neutral in the faction fights. The Archbishop was thus on friendly terms with all the Greek political parties—including E.A.M.—but, owing to his position, had been able to keep himself free from political commitments. The Archbishop, while holding the see of Corinth, had travelled in the United States to collect funds for Greek relief after the earthquake of 1927 in Corinth.

² Mr. Eden also suggested that, since we could not take immediate military action against the Germans in Greece, we should try to increase the amount now being distributed by the Swedish-Swiss Red Cross organisation in Greece, and ensure that we had stocks of food, etc. to bring into the country as soon as the German withdrawal had taken place.

(a) WM(43)155; R11829/414/19.

but that Mr. Eden's proposals were complementary and that we could not accept one without the other. Hence we should await a report—for which the Chiefs of Staff had asked—on the military value of the resistance movements, and also invite the King, and possibly also the Greek Prime Minister to come to London for discussions. Meanwhile we should continue to withhold supplies from E.A.M. and E.L.A.S.

The Commander-in-Chief, Middle East, reported on November 19 (a) that the future military value of E.A.M.—E.L.A.S. was likely to be small but that they would probably support us passively on their own terms; the best solution—which had been suggested by Mr. Leeper—would be (a) to tell the King that we were withdrawing our support from E.A.M.—E.L.A.S., and that, on this understanding, we wished him to issue a declaration that he would not return to Greece until invited to do so by a properly constituted and representative Greek Government on Greek territory after the liberation of the country, (b) to incorporate E.D.E.S. bands in the Greek regular army, (c) to inform the E.L.A.S. bands, by means of propaganda leaflets, of our policy and the reason for it, and invite them to join the Greek army.

Mr. Churchill and Mr. Eden, during their visit to the Middle East (b) for the Cairo and Teheran conferences, therefore strongly advised the King to say definitely that he would not go back unless he were invited to do so after a plebiscite. They argued not only that such a statement would unite all Greek opinion against the plans of E.A.M. for a dictatorship, but also that postponement was in the King's interest, since if he returned at once in the extremely difficult period immediately following the liberation, he would be blamed for any mistakes by his Government. Unfortunately, although the United States Ambassador had supported the British plan, President Roosevelt, who also saw the King at Cairo, advised him not to accept it.¹ The King was thus strengthened in his refusal to follow the British suggestion. He complained to Field-Marshal Smuts that the Americans were his only friends and that the British wanted to get rid of him. Field-Marshal Smuts told the King that this was not the case, but he (Field-Marshal Smuts) was afraid that if we persisted in asking for a declaration the King would abdicate.

¹ The President's action in the matter was the more unexpected since the State Department fully supported the British proposals. Mr. Roosevelt complained that the British Government had not consulted him about the new policy. This complaint was contrary to the facts. The President himself had seen the British proposals before they were submitted to the King. Mr. Eden had also spoken about them at length to Mr. Winant and to Mr. Hopkins. (c)

(a) R11908, 11983, 12642/4/19. (b) WM(43)169.2, C.A.; R12837/2319/19.
 (c) R13507/2319/19.

- (a) In the end, however, the King agreed to a compromise. He had written to M. Tsouderos on November 8 a letter for communication to the other Greek Ministers stating that at the moment of liberation he would reconsider, in the light of the political and military conditions then prevailing, the date of his return to Greece. The King was now willing to meet the wishes of his Ministers by adding a few words to the effect that his decision would be taken in agreement with his Government. The Greek Ministers who (with the exception of M. Tsouderos) had not seen the wider declaration proposed by the British Government, accepted the letter in its revised form.
- (b) The King also agreed that he and his Government should be represented in Athens by Archbishop Damaskinos and a secret committee. M. Tsouderos had proposed—with the King's consent—that the Archbishop should negotiate with the guerrilla leaders, but, at Mr. Leeper's suggestion, the Greek Government themselves agreed to address an appeal for an armistice to General Zervas of E.D.E.S. and to General Sarafis, the commander-in-chief of E.L.A.S. Before this appeal was made information was received
- (c) from Greece that General Zervas, who had already tried several times to persuade the E.L.A.S. leaders to stop the civil war, was making another attempt at reconciliation, and that General Sarafis had said that E.L.A.S. would consider proposals put forward by the British Military Mission. M. Tsouderos therefore issued his appeal on December 21 in unexpectedly favourable circumstances. He
- (d) asked for the support of the United States and Soviet Governments. Mr. Hull agreed at once with his policy. M. Molotov would not at first take any positive action, but in fact did not order the Communists to refuse co-operation. On January 3, 1944, the Soviet Government informed Mr. Eden, and the Greek Ambassador in Moscow, that, in view of the British belief that reconciliation between the rival Partisan groups in Greece was possible, they thought it expedient to establish a united front of all such groups 'for the purpose of strengthening the struggle against the German invaders'.

(iii)

The Merokovo Conference: the King's opposition to a Regency: the Lebanon Conference: further demands by E.A.M.: Mr. Churchill's meeting with M. Papandreou: the move of the Greek Government to Italy (January–August, 1944).

- (f) In a letter of January 6, 1944, to Mr. Leeper, Sir O. Sargent summed up British policy after President Roosevelt had dissuaded

(a) R13188/4/19; R13091/2319/19. (b) R13093/2319/19. (c) R13496, 13497, 13498/4/19. (d) R13552, 13708/4/19. (e) R178, 198/9/19. (f) R13883/4/19 (1943).

the King from making a public pledge that he would not return to Greece until the constitutional issue had been settled. The King's refusal to issue a plain declaration had made it impossible to carry out the plan of getting rid of the E.A.M.-E.L.A.S. leaders and incorporating the most efficient of the rank and file in the Greek army. It was now necessary to work for a united front which would include the E.A.M. leaders. The chances of success were far less promising, but we could not allow the resistance movement to disintegrate at a moment when it was 'essential to keep the Germans guessing everywhere and to subject them to as much strain as possible in every one of the occupied countries'.

Sir O. Sargent admitted that we had to subordinate longer term political aims to the immediate military necessity, and therefore that we were compelled to 'support and collaborate with revolutionary elements such as Tito and the Communist leaders of E.A.M. . . . All we can do is to try and restrain the ruthless and ambitious men with whom we are working.' Sir O. Sargent was not very hopeful, but thought the prospects slightly more favourable in Greece than in Yugoslavia.

The first step in this new policy was to secure agreement between (a) E.A.M.-E.L.A.S. and E.D.E.S. The overtures from the E.A.M. and E.L.A.S. leaders were due to the realisation that they were not strong enough, in spite of their superior numbers, to liquidate General Zervas and his 'National Bands' (General Zervas had abandoned the use of the name E.D.E.S. after discovering that some members of the organisation had been in contact with collaborationists). It was also evident that the standing of E.A.M. and E.L.A.S. among Greeks was rapidly declining. Their bitter attacks on other groups had disgusted non-party patriots; the populations in their areas of operations suffered terribly from the famine in the winter months. Their raids on the enemy did little damage, but brought very severe German reprisals, and their plans to perpetuate their authority after the war were suspected by the non-Communist majority.

Hence early in February the E.A.M. and E.L.A.S. leaders agreed to a truce, and to a conference with the National Bands and E.K.K.A. in order to reunite the guerrilla movements. The conference was held at Merokovo¹ in the Pindus. The Allied military authorities in the Middle East were represented by Colonel Woodhouse, Senior British Liaison Officer, assisted by his American colleague, Major

¹ The agreement was in fact signed at a bridge leading to the adjacent hamlet of Plaka. This bridge crossed the small river dividing E.D.E.S. and E.A.M./E.L.A.S. territory.

(a) R2563, 2564, 2697, 2706, 2795, 2888, 3151, 3152, 3251, 3430, 3818, 3962, 4016, 8897/9/19.

Win. The main difficulty in the way of reaching an agreement was—as was expected—that E.A.M. and E.L.A.S. wanted the amalgamation of the guerrilla forces on terms which would give the E.A.M. central committee control over the whole body, and thus enable them to negotiate on the political side with M. Tsouderos's Government as though there were, in fact, a government in Free Greece. General Zervas and E.K.K.A., on the other hand, wanted to keep control of their own forces and thus prevent E.A.M. from destroying them by disruption from within.

All parties were agreed upon the necessity of some kind of negotiating body to discuss with M. Tsouderos the formation of a Greek National Government. They carried this agreement as far as a decision to appoint a 'Preparatory Government Committee' consisting of representatives of all the resistance organisations. They could not, however, agree either upon the proportion in which the participating bodies should be represented or upon the powers which it should exercise. E.A.M. claimed preponderant representation, and wished the committee to have executive powers. General Zervas wished its functions to be limited to negotiation.

The conference also agreed that, on the military side, a single Commander-in-Chief was necessary, but again there were wide differences of opinion about his powers. E.A.M. and E.L.A.S. considered that the Commander-in-Chief could not carry out his duties—which would include matters of civil affairs—unless he had the support of a Government—in other words, unless the Preparatory Government Committee had executive powers. At this point in the discussion there was serious danger that E.L.A.S. would start fighting again. Colonel Woodhouse was therefore given authority from Middle East General Headquarters (with the approval of Mr. Leeper) to warn all parties that, if the civil war broke out again, we should publicly denounce the leaders whom we regarded as responsible for it.

With this means of pressure at his disposal Colonel Woodhouse was able to persuade E.A.M. and E.L.A.S. to accept a resolution—to which other parties had already agreed—providing that each group would normally keep to its own territory, and that if, for operational purposes, one group had to enter the territory of another, such movement should not be regarded as a hostile act justifying the resumption of civil war. This agreement, in fact, was once again greatly to the advantage of E.A.M. since they were holding—after the withdrawal of the Italian garrisons—a much wider area of territory than the other groups. No decision was reached on the powers of the Commander-in-Chief or of the governmental committee. An informal agreement to offer the post of Commander-in-Chief to General Othonaios—a good officer uncompromised by any

political affiliations—came to nothing because General Othonaios refused the post owing to his complete mistrust of E.A.M.

The Merokovo Conference dispersed on February 29, 1944. Meanwhile M. Tsouderos had been continuing his efforts to secure a broadly-based national government and, for this purpose, to bring to Cairo from Athens the leading members of the former parliamentary parties—that is to say, the parties which had existed before the dictatorship. M. Tsouderos's view was that, if these party leaders were represented in his Government, he would be in a stronger position to meet the claims of E.A.M. to be the sole governing authority in Greece.

M. Tsouderos's Government also tried to by-pass the E.A.M. claims by inviting Archbishop Damaskinos to accept powers to act on behalf of the King and Government after the liberation of Athens from the Germans. This measure was necessary because evidence was reaching Cairo to an increasing extent, from the British Liaison Officers as well as from Greek sources, that E.A.M. and E.L.A.S. were again intending to use force to seize power. M. Tsouderos hoped, therefore, to counter these plans, partly by a military agreement between the guerilla bands, and partly also by asking the Archbishop to hold a secret conference with the representatives of all parties and resistance organisations and to send to Cairo three or four representatives accepted by the conference to take office as members of a National Government.

There were obvious difficulties in the way of this plan. Several of the Greek politicians had ambitions of their own, and were not enthusiastic over supporting M. Tsouderos. The leaders of E.A.M. clearly wanted sole control for themselves, and at this time public opinion outside Greece knew little about the real intentions of E.A.M. and regarded them as a patriotic and moderate body. The British military authorities in Cairo and the British Government at home, in their desire not to hamper the work of conciliation, did nothing to contradict this view of E.A.M.,¹ or to enlighten public opinion either on the aims of the controlling minority in the E.A.M. and E.L.A.S. organisation or on the methods which it had been employing to maintain and increase its power in Greece. The greatest obstacle, however, to the immediate negotiations was the stubbornness of the King. Greek public opinion among all the resistance

¹ The Foreign Office complained especially of the broadcasts on Greece in the European service of the B.B.C. The British press, including *The Times*, inclined to take a similar line in accepting the much advertised and inflated claims of E.A.M.—E.L.A.S. The King's obstinacy and the incessant quarrels of the Greek politicians also damaged the standing of the Government in exile. See also below, p. 437.

groups and among all parties except the extreme Right supported by some members of M. Tsouderos's Government wished the King to make a more explicit statement that he would await the result of a free plebiscite before he returned to Greece. The King refused to go beyond the declaration in his 'revised' letter of November 8.

The King's attitude thus added to the difficulties of the Archbishop in Athens as well as to those of M. Tsouderos in Cairo. As after some time the representatives from Athens had not arrived, M. Tsouderos wanted to act without them, and to bring out to Cairo at once the three leading moderates. He thought that, if they were added to his Cabinet without delay, E.A.M. would be less able to insist on their own terms for a National Government. The Foreign Office, however, considered it better to keep to the plan of awaiting the result of the Archbishop's negotiations in Athens, in order to secure that the representatives from Greece included the members of the resistance organisations as well as the leaders of the political parties.

- (a) Matters were thus delayed until an emissary from the Archbishop reached Cairo on March 6 bringing certain proposals. All parties at the discussions in Athens agreed that (i) the King and his Government should sign, at once, a secret Constitutional Act appointing the Archbishop as Regent at the time of liberation and until the Greek people 'should have expressed its sovereign will on the question of the King's return'. This phrase implied that the King would not return at once after the liberation. (ii) The Regent should entrust in due course to M. Sophoulis¹ the formation of an all-party Government.

No agreement had been reached on two other resolutions: the moderates considered that there was no need to form a secret committee under the Archbishop to direct resistance and to act as a Governmental Committee during the first days of liberation; the Cairo Government was sufficiently 'national' and did not require to be broadened. If, however, it were thought desirable, they did not exclude the addition of two moderate Left-wing members. The Socialist and Communist parties, on the other hand, wanted the addition to the Government of a section within Greece, and including the Ministries of Home Affairs, Justice, Education and Welfare.

- (b) These proposals put M. Tsouderos in a difficult position. The choice of M. Sophoulis—a man of eighty-two—as Prime Minister after the liberation was probably due to the feeling of the other party leaders and of E.A.M. that he would be less of an obstacle to their

¹ M. Sophoulis was the leader of the Liberal (Venizelist) party. His personal relations with the King before 1941 had been good. He was prepared to work for the King's return.

(a) R3700, 4595/9/19. (b) R3810/9/19.

plans. Somewhat naïvely they therefore left M. Tsouderos with full responsibility for solving the immediate problems and reserved for themselves the spoils of victory in the shape of office after the war. The disagreement between the Left and the other parties over the broadening of the Government was also a serious matter, since each group threatened withdrawal if it failed to get a decision in its favour.

The main difficulty, as M. Tsouderos understood, was over the (a) Regency upon which all parties were agreed. The Left were using the question of a plebiscite over the King's return as a means of rallying public opinion to their side. The other parties wished to get the question settled in order to deprive the Socialists and Communists of their most effective piece of propaganda. M. Tsouderos proposed, as a first step, that the King should sign the Constitutional Act; he (M. Tsouderos) would then bring to Cairo certain politicians belonging to parties not hitherto represented in the Government, and would then open negotiations with the Left.

The King made it impossible for M. Tsouderos to carry out this (b) plan. He informed M. Tsouderos on March 13 that he would not sign the secret Constitutional Act appointing the Archbishop as Regent.¹ In reporting the King's decision to the Foreign Office Mr. Leeper said that the King's refusal would create a situation 'even worse than that which exists already in Yugoslavia'.

The King's refusal was the more serious because on March 11² (c) the Senior British Liaison Officer at E.L.A.S. headquarters was informed that E.A.M. had set up a Political Committee of Liberation, and that the E.L.A.S. forces were taking an oath of allegiance to it. E.A.M. claimed that the authority for their action was derived from an invitation which they had sent in December 1943, to all parties and organisations, and to the Greek Government in Cairo, to form a 'Government of National Unity'. The Committee meanwhile would issue acts carrying the force of law, and would convene a National Council of freely elected representatives of the people. Their appeal was carefully designed to secure popular support and to reassure doubters who were afraid of their Communist affiliations; thus their declaration included a statement of their intention to protect 'rights of property'.

M. Tsouderos replied to this move by assuring the new Committee (d) that he was continuing his negotiations with E.A.M. and with

¹ The King was encouraged in his refusal by Field-Marshal Smuts, who felt that agreement to the secret Constitutional Act would prejudice the King's position in Greece. Smuts also felt strongly that no one but a member of the Greek royal family should be named as Regent. (e)

² Mr. Leeper reported this information on March 13.

(a) R3770/9/19. (b) R3988/9/19. (c) R3985, 4233/9/19. (d) R4255/9/19.
(e) *Aide-mémoire* from Smuts to King George II, March 20, 1944 (Churchill Papers/211).

personalities in Athens for the formation of a National Government. He thus politely disclaimed the committee's authority by referring to negotiations not with them but with E.A.M. At the same time he told M. Sophoulis that he wanted to form a National Government in Cairo, though he did not exclude the possibility that one or two Ministers should later go to Greece. The Political Committee now

- (a) made any arrangement more difficult by an inaugural proclamation to the Greek people in which they claimed to speak for the whole nation, invited all parties and organisations and M. Tsouderos to join them in forming a 'Government of National Solidarity', and stated that they would see to it that such a government 'guided' the Greek people at the time of the plebiscite.

The situation now became worse owing to the outbreak on April 3 of mutinies in the Greek military units at Alexandria in favour of the Political Committee, and as a protest against M. Tsouderos's supposed subservience to the King.¹ These mutinies were the more futile because at the time when they broke out M. Tsouderos had resigned owing to pressure from his Republican colleagues, and on April 9 the leaders of E.A.M. had sent messages accepting M. Tsouderos's invitation to a conference.

- (b) This conference took place in the Lebanon between May 17 and 21. Meanwhile M. Papandreou,² who had come to Cairo from Greece early in April, had formed a temporary Government of senior officials and officers to carry on only until a settlement had been reached at the conference. As chairman of the conference M. Papandreou produced a programme which was signed by all the delegates and submitted to the King as the resolutions of the conference. The programme contained the following points: (i) Reorganisation and establishment of discipline in the Greek forces in the Middle East. (ii) Unification and discipline of all guerrilla bands under the orders of a single government. (iii) The establishment of personal security and liberty in 'Free Greece'. (iv) The supply of food and medicines to Greece. (v) The maintenance of order and political liberty after the liberation. The decision on the constitution and the régime would be taken as soon as possible after the liberation. The King's declaration of November 8 was stated to be of

¹ The Greek force in Egypt was dangerously open to political agitation stirred up by E.A.M. The troops had little to do, and had been given little chance of active service. Their own Government had not much prestige, and there were also disputes between the Greek regular officers and Greeks enlisted in Egypt.

² M. Papandreou (b. 1888) was the founder of the small Social Democratic party, an offshoot of the main Venizelist party. M. Papandreou was thus a liberal republican and, personally, opposed to the King's return, but he had worked since the occupation for unity among all Greeks, and considered that the question of the régime should be subordinated to that of resistance until after the liberation of the country.

(a) R4060/9/19. (b) R7881, 7895, 7969, 7970/745/19; R7823, 8091, 9771/745/19.
(c) R10504/9/19.

great importance, but individual members of the Government would be free to maintain their own views.¹ M. Papandreou evaded the difficulty of a statement about the King's return by the argument that no further statement was necessary. The King had already promised that, at the time of the liberation, he would consult his Ministers on the date of his return. The Ministers agreed with the general view of the Greek people that he should await the national decision before his return. The King had therefore accepted in advance the advice that the Ministers were resolved to give him, and the problem was therefore settled.

A declaration to this effect was issued on June 12 by the Greek Government—reformed after the Conference, though as yet without E.A.M. members—but in fact the Lebanon Conference did not at once bring unity into Greek affairs. The King disliked the interpretation given by M. Papandreou to his letter of November 8. The E.A.M. leaders in Greece went on with their organisation of a National Council and maintained their claim to be the Government of Free Greece. They refused to ratify the settlement accepted by the E.A.M. delegates at the Conference, and in the course of negotiations which dragged on until July put forward demands for the Ministries of the Interior, Justice, Education, Agriculture, Labour and Relief (a) and for the Under-Secretariat for War. They also asked for the resignation of M. Papandreou, and for the appointment of an E.L.A.S. officer as Chief of the General Staff if an agreed Commander-in-Chief were appointed to take charge of operations inside Greece. M. Papandreou could not accept these demands since they (b) would have given E.A.M. control of the Government at the time of liberation. After further negotiation E.A.M. on August 17 dropped their demand for M. Papandreou's resignation, and accepted a compromise under which they were allotted five posts including the Ministry of Justice but not the Ministry of the Interior.

M. Papandreou went to see Mr. Churchill during the latter's visit to Italy. At this meeting in Rome on August 21, M. Papandreou (c) said to the Prime Minister that the State in Greece was unarmed and the arms were in the hands of organisations representing only a minority. His programme was to reverse this position, and ensure that the armed forces were under the control of the State. He therefore had to create a National Army and Police, and for this purpose would need British armed help.

Mr. Churchill said that the British Government were considering whether they could send British forces into Greece to aid in the

¹ The programme also dealt with the punishment of traitors and collaborators, provision for relief and reconstruction, and—somewhat vaguely—the full satisfaction of national claims.

(a) R10504/9/19. (b) R10570/9/19. (c) R13204, 13761/13204/19.

reintroduction of orderly government, but that no decision had been reached, and the matter must be kept secret. Meanwhile the Greek Government should move from Cairo to Italy without giving any precise indication of their future intentions. Mr. Churchill did not think that a new declaration by the King was necessary. He spoke of the 'friendly and chivalrous feelings of the British nation towards the King', but made it clear that we had no intention of trespassing on the rights of the Greek people to determine their own destinies and choose between a monarchy and a republic. The choice, however, must be made by the Greek people as a whole and not by a 'handful of doctrinaires'.

M. Papandreou welcomed the proposal for a move of the Government to Italy. No reference was made to this move in a communiqué issued on August 24 announcing M. Papandreou's meeting with Mr. Churchill, but at the beginning of September the Greek Government arrived at Bari.

(iv)

The Caserta agreement: the E.A.M.—E.L.A.S. rebellion in Athens: proposals for the Regency of Archbishop Damaskinos: refusal of the King to accept the proposal: decision of the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden to go to Athens (September–December 24, 1944).

An agreement of some kind was essential since the withdrawal of the Germans from Greece was now certain to take place. Roumania had accepted armistice terms on August 23 and Bulgaria on September 6. The British Government were preparing to carry out their plan of sending a small force into Greece to assist in clearing out the Germans and to secure order and the rapid provision of relief for the population in the difficult period of transition after the Germans had disappeared.¹ Early in September the Greek Government—without the King—moved to the neighbourhood of Salerno.

- (a) Under British advice and direction, they reached an agreement at the British headquarters at Caserta on September 26 with Generals Sarafis and Zervas, whom the British authorities brought to Italy for the purpose. This Caserta agreement put the two leaders under the orders of Lieutenant-General R. M. Scobie, Allied Commander-in-Chief designate in Greece, and provided for the co-operation of

¹ Mr. Churchill informed President Roosevelt of this plan on August 17, and the President approved of it on August 26. The Soviet Government were not informed until September 21; they gave their approval on September 23. In August Russian officers from Marshal Tito's headquarters were dropped by parachute over E.L.A.S. headquarters in Greece. These officers did not take much part in directing E.L.A.S. policy.

(a) R15394, 15395, 15396/9/19. (b) T1625/4, No. 755; T1680/4, No. 608 (Churchill Papers/210; R13088, 13425/273/19). (c) R15153/273/19.

all Greek guerrilla forces in harassing the German withdrawal, maintaining law and order, and preventing civil war and illegal arrests.

E.L.A.S. did not honour the Caserta agreement. Before the signature of the agreement they had taken opportunity, after the Germans had begun to withdraw from the western Peloponnese, to enter the town of Pyrgos and massacre several hundreds of their political opponents. There was general fear of similar massacres on a larger scale in Athens and elsewhere. For this reason, the entry of the first British troops into Athens on October 14, 1944, was welcomed with great enthusiasm. The Greek Government followed four days later.

M. Papandreou now reformed his Cabinet and, with British and U.N.R.R.A. help, and with the continued collaboration of the Swedish and Swiss Red Cross organisations, began the work of reconstruction. The failure of the Greeks¹ to prevent the Germans from carrying out demolitions made the immediate problem of relief harder to solve, but at the end of October some 3,000 tons of supplies were being landed daily at the Piraeus. An effort was made, under British advice, to end the inflation by the introduction of new drachma notes.² The most dangerous problem, however, was that the Government had little authority outside Athens. The rest of Greece was controlled—to the exclusion of government officials—mainly by the armed forces of E.A.M.—E.L.A.S. who took orders solely from their Communist leaders. Even in Athens armed groups circulated freely. Hence the first requisite for the restoration of the authority of the Government, if they were not to surrender the whole machinery of state to E.A.M., was to replace by their own forces the E.A.M.—E.L.A.S. armed 'police' or militia.³ M. Papandreou proposed to carry out this essential measure by calling up the 1915 class of men liable to military service, and using them as a National Guard to take over police duties temporarily from the E.A.M. 'police' on December 1. The E.A.M. 'police' were to hand in their arms; all the guerrillas—E.D.E.S. as well as E.L.A.S.—would be demobilised on December 10, and replaced by a national army to be formed by calling up the 1916 to 1919 classes.

The E.A.M. leaders did not accept this plan. The reluctance of the Government to demobilise, simultaneously with the guerrilla

¹ General Zervas did something to harass the enemy retreat. E.L.A.S. were more concerned with rounding up their Greek opponents.

² The old drachma notes had lost all value—the exchange rate for them was at a nominal figure of 50 millions to the pound sterling.

³ After the Italian surrender the Germans had recruited 'Security battalions' among Greek anti-Communists. The numbers recruited were about 5,000. It was agreed in the Caserta discussions that these battalions should be treated as enemy forces. In fact they tended—for their own safety—to fade away as the Germans withdrew.

bands, the so-called 'Sacred Squadron' and the 'Mountain Brigade' which had been fighting in Italy (these units were known to be anti-Communist)¹ caused E.A.M.-E.L.A.S. to fear reprisals, but the main reason for their refusal to agree to the disarming of their own forces was that they wanted to seize power for themselves. The two Communist Ministers in the Cabinet were already using their position as Ministers respectively of Labour and Agriculture for partisan purposes. E.A.M. propaganda was increasing in extent and violence, and working up feeling against alleged plans for a right-wing *coup d'état*. The E.A.M. 'police' refused to hand in their own weapons, and obstructed the call-up of men for the new National Guard. On December 2 the Central Committee of E.A.M. decided upon a general strike against the 'dictatorial methods' of the Government and, in contravention of the Caserta agreement, demanded the re-establishment of an E.L.A.S. High Command independent of the Allied Commander-in-Chief and of the authority of the Greek Government.²

The E.A.M. committee also called a mass meeting in Athens for December 3. In view of the tension of public feeling the Government prohibited this meeting but E.A.M. and the Communist Party persisted in an attempt to hold it. They also ordered the mobilisation of their Athens and Piraeus 'reserves'. The result was a serious clash with the Government forces. This riot was followed by a more general E.A.M.-E.L.A.S. attack. During the evening E.L.A.S. forces in Attica began to occupy the northern suburbs of Athens and arms were distributed to E.L.A.S. supporters in the working-class quarters of the city. On December 4 E.L.A.S. began attacks on the Athens and Piraeus police stations; by nightfall they had captured fifteen out of the twenty-four, including the Piraeus headquarters building. During the night of December 4-5 a small British force surrounded and disarmed an E.L.A.S. regiment 800 strong which was marching towards Athens,³ and on December 5 British troops reoccupied a number of police stations.

- (a) The Prime Minister instructed General Scobie on the night of December 4-5 that all possible reinforcements would be sent to him, and that he had full authority to maintain order in Athens and to destroy or neutralise all E.A.M.-E.L.A.S. bands approaching the city.

¹ The 'Sacred Squadron' (or 'Battalion' or 'Regiment') was recruited solely from officers. The 'Mountain Brigade' was a unit of the Greek army formed in the Middle East after the German occupation of Greece. The brigade had taken part in the capture of Rimini.

² General Scobie broadcast to the people of Greece that he would resist a *coup d'état* or any unconstitutional act of violence and that he stood firmly behind the existing constitutional Government.

³ The disarmed men were given coffee and sent home.

(a) T22554, Churchill Papers/212; R19933/745/19.

General Scobie gave orders that the rebels should be driven out of (a) Athens. On December 5 his troops occupied the E.A.M. and K.K.E. headquarters in central Athens, but the task of clearing the city was extremely difficult. E.L.A.S. were far superior in numbers, though they had neither armour nor aircraft. They infiltrated back after dark into areas which British troops had previously cleared but were unable, through lack of men, to patrol. Eighty per cent of the rebels were in plain clothes, and managed to hide their arms while a block was being searched. Hence after a few days' fighting General Scobie's troops were themselves besieged in central Athens, and at the aerodrome at Phaleron Bay.

On the night of December 12–13 a body of E.L.A.S. wearing British battle dress and steel helmets entered the barracks of the British 23rd Armoured Brigade. They took a hundred prisoners in their first rush and were not finally driven off until after twelve hours' fighting. Field-Marshal Alexander, who had visited Athens on December 11, described the position as grave. Reinforcements, however, were sent at once and began to arrive on December 13; the British forces had maintained their control of the most important points in central Athens, and the rebels themselves had begun to realise that they had failed. They had expected to face the British authorities with a successful *coup d'état*, but M. Papandreou's Government had not resigned, and were now strongly backed by British forces. The rebels had also hoped that public opinion in Great Britain and the United States and, possibly, action by the Soviet Government would have made it impossible for the British military authorities to take effective measures against them. They were now willing to negotiate but only on their own terms. Meanwhile they were abducting large numbers of hostages in the parts of Athens under their control. Many of these hostages were murdered; others—including two elderly Englishmen—died of their harsh treatment.¹ On December 12 they sent an emissary to General Scobie asking for the terms of a cease-fire. General Scobie replied that all Athenians who had been fighting for E.L.A.S. must hand in their arms, and that all armed E.L.A.S. troops must retire beyond the boundaries of Attica.

E.A.M.—E.L.A.S. would not accept these terms. Hence the fighting continued, and meanwhile the British Government had to look for some way of getting a political settlement which would prevent a recurrence of this civil war. As far as the rebels were concerned, the Foreign Office thought that the leaders should be severely punished, and that E.A.M.—E.L.A.S. should hand over all their arms, but (b)

¹ See also below, pp. 425 and 435–7.

(a) R20361/9/19. (b) R20361/9/19.

that the terms to the rank and file should be generous. The main E.L.A.S. forces in the country, and the non-Communist leaders, had not taken part in the rebellion, and should be given a chance of dissociating themselves from the Communists. The Government should remain a coalition including representatives of the left-wing parties.

It was also clear that M. Papandreou and his Ministers had lost authority, and could not take the initiative in working for or carrying out a settlement. They had already in November invited General Plastiras to return to Greece. General Plastiras's republican views made it impossible even for the Communists to accuse him of working secretly for the monarchy. If he were appointed Commander-in-Chief or Prime Minister, he was more likely than any other man to gain general respect and to restore order.

- (a) General Plastiras arrived in Greece on December 13. Three days earlier General Scobie and Mr. Leeper had brought forward again the proposal, rejected earlier by the King,¹ for the appointment of Archbishop Damaskinos as Regent. Mr. Macmillan, who had come to Athens with Field-Marshal Alexander, strongly supported this plan. The Prime Minister's first reaction to the proposal was favourable. He also thought that he could persuade the King of Greece to accept it. He approached the King on December 12. The King refused to agree to a Regency, though he was willing to appoint the Archbishop as Prime Minister in a new Government.
- (b) The War Cabinet met in the early afternoon of December 12 and after considerable discussion decided to ask the King to reconsider his refusal of the proposal for a Regency. The War Cabinet then adjourned, and the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden saw the King again. They came back to the War Cabinet with another refusal from the King.
- (c) The King argued that if he appointed a Regent the majority of the Greek people would regard him as having abandoned his cause and duties as King before they had had a chance of expressing their views. The King repeated his willingness to approve the appointment of the Archbishop as Prime Minister without further reference to himself. Mr. Macmillan and Mr. Leeper were instructed to arrange matters on these lines if they thought the King's suggestion feasible.
- (d) Mr. Macmillan replied, however, on December 13 that the Archbishop was unlikely to agree to act as Prime Minister, since he would not have the detachment required by his rank and profession.

¹ See above, pp. 405-7.

(a) R20427/745/19. (b) WM(44)165, C.A.; WM(44)166, C.A. (c) R20497/472/19. (d) R20723/9/19.

Mr. Macmillan thought that the King was missing a 'splendid opportunity'; the establishment of a Regency would be regarded as the act of a statesman and a patriot, and as the greatest contribution which the King could make at this grave time. If he failed to make it, his chances of returning to the throne would be lost. He would be regarded as the sole obstacle to pacification, and the British Government and people would be accused of connivance at his obstinacy. Mr. Macmillan said that each party was afraid of reprisals, and that the only solution was a Regency until elections or a plebiscite could be held. The alternative was a long and difficult military operation with great embarrassment in international politics.

The War Cabinet considered Mr. Macmillan's reply on the (a) evening of December 13. They agreed that the King should be strongly pressed to withdraw his opposition to the proposal. The Prime Minister and Mr. Eden saw him again on the evening of December 13. Later the King left a memorandum with the Prime Minister confirming his refusal. He followed the memorandum by (b) a long letter on December 14, repeating his objections to the surrender of his authority to a Regent who would be free to take decisions in his name and possibly against the wishes of the majority of the Greek people.

After their interview of December 13 with the King Mr. Eden (c) telegraphed to Mr. Macmillan and Mr. Leeper that the King had said that the advice which he was receiving from Greece showed no enthusiasm for the proposal; M. Papandreou, for example, had formally advised against it. Mr. Eden asked for a statement of the reasons why Mr. Macmillan and Mr. Leeper thought that a Regency would receive wide popular support. He said that the King would find it easier to come to a decision if he had opinions from M. Papandreou and other leaders favourable to the plan. The Prime Minister and Mr. Eden would again 'place the issue four-square before the King' when they had further evidence that the plan had Greek support.

On December 14 Mr. Macmillan saw M. Papandreou and told him that what was needed in Greece was a head of the State who was independent of all parties and past political controversies. The King could not give this service; the only possible alternative was the Archbishop of Athens acting as sole Regent or head of a Regency Council. Mr. Macmillan said that this plan had already been put to the King who had refused it. M. Papandreou agreed that it would be a mistake for the Archbishop to become Prime Minister. He undertook to send a telegram to the King recommending the appointment

(a) WM(44)168, C.A.; R21286/745/19. (b) R21067/9/19. (c) R20723/9/19.

of the Archbishop as sole Regent. He also hoped to obtain a similar recommendation from M. Sophoulis and other leading figures.

- (a) On December 15 Mr. Macmillan telegraphed that M. Papandreou had hesitated about fulfilling his promise, and that he appeared to be afraid that the Regent might not reappoint him as Prime Minister. He had agreed, however, to recommend a Regency of three. M. Sophoulis had recommended a single Regent. Mr. Macmillan said that he and Mr. Leeper had put considerable pressure on MM. Papandreou and Sophoulis. Each was afraid that a Regency might favour a policy of reconciliation rather than of strengthening the anti-Communist character of the Government against an opposition which would never be 'reconciled'.

M. Papandreou had indeed sent messages to the King on December 14 that M. Sophoulis was opposed to a Regency and that he (M. Papandreou) accepted it only owing to pressure put on him that Mr. Churchill was insisting on it. M. Papandreou's own view was that a Regency was unnecessary. The King received these messages on December 15 and sent them to the Foreign Office through the Greek Embassy on December 16.

- (b) The War Cabinet met on December 16 before the King's communication of that day had been received. They felt some difficulty in forcing the King to accept a sole Regency, or a Council of Regency, until they knew more definitely that the advice tendered to him by his own Ministers was in favour of one or other of these proposals. They also wanted to be more certain that the appointment of a Regent was the best or only possible solution, and that the Archbishop was suitable for the post. The King already had doubts about his suitability, and M. Papandreou did not want him as sole Regent. The War Cabinet therefore decided to ask Mr. Macmillan and Mr. Leeper for more information. Meanwhile they agreed that the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden should see the King again and try to get his acceptance in principle to a Regency, and warn him that, whatever his decision, he might find it necessary in the near future to have a representative in Athens. The War Cabinet thought that in any event there was much to be said for a delay of two or three days before taking a decision on the Regency question, since with the arrival of reinforcements the military position might turn to our advantage.

- (c) The Prime Minister and Mr. Eden saw the King after the War Cabinet meeting. The King showed them, in addition to the messages of December 14, a telegram of December 15 in which M. Sophoulis had said that he had accepted the Regency proposal only owing to great pressure, and a telegram of December 16 from M. Papandreou

(a) R20996/745/19; 21028, R21029/9/19. (b) WM(44)169, C.A. (c) R21030/9/19.

stated that Mr. Macmillan, Mr. Leeper and General Scobie had insisted that the continuation of British political and military aid would be impossible without an acceptance of the Regency proposal, since the Prime Minister's position was in danger. M. Papan-dreou thought that the plan would be regarded as a victory for the rebels, but in view of the statements of the British representatives, he felt bound to accept it.

Mr. Macmillan, on hearing from Mr. Eden an account of the (a) King's statements, telegraphed to the Prime Minister on the morning of December 16 that the Greek politicians had not sent the King an accurate report. Mr. Macmillan and Mr. Leeper had argued for the sole regency of the Archbishop on these grounds: (i) the plan would be welcomed in Greece with general acclamation and relief, and would be a guarantee against reprisals and counter-revolution, (ii) it would be well received in the United States, (iii) it would relieve the political situation in Great Britain where press and political criticism was very strong, and the position of the Government injured at a time when it was desirable to concentrate all energies on the prosecution of the war. Mr. Macmillan repeated that one of the reasons for the hesitation of the Greek politicians was that they thought that the Archbishop would support a policy of reconciliation which they considered dangerous because it was unlikely to succeed.

Mr. Churchill, who had already telegraphed that there was no (b) need for Mr. Macmillan to worry about the position in Great Britain, regarded Mr. Macmillan's arguments as unfortunate. He sent a somewhat angry telegram of reply that Mr. Macmillan should not have introduced into a discussion of Greek questions arguments (c) about relieving the political situation at home and about the strength of press and political criticism.

'You cannot judge from where you are whether the position of His Majesty's Government is injured. At any rate we are a united Cabinet, and have every confidence that we can carry our purposes through with the full support of Parliament. You certainly "took my name in vain",¹ I wish I could feel as sure that "it was for a good cause". You say that military predominance in Athens is only the first step. Let us have that first step and others will be easier. The question of relations with the United States is also one to be dealt with between the two Governments.'

The Prime Minister's view at this time was that Mr. Macmillan and Mr. Leeper were asking that 'a lawful King' should be compelled, against the advice of his Ministers, to install a dictator or

¹ Mr. Macmillan had used these words in one of his telegrams of December 17.

(a) R21499/745/19; Churchill Papers/212. (b) T2380/4 (Churchill Papers/212; R21276/745/19). (c) T2386/4 (Churchill Papers/212; R21499/745/19).

quasi-dictator in the person of the Archbishop of whose character and intentions he (the King) was in doubt. We could not in fact force the King to take this action. All we could do in the case of his continued refusal would be to withdraw our recognition of the Royal Government and transfer it to a Regency. Before doing so we should have to consult our Allies. Mr. Churchill thought that the best practical measure would be a Regency of three, and that he could probably persuade the King to agree to such a measure which would have the advantage of not committing us to a dictatorship.

- (a) The Foreign Office, on the other hand, did not regard the Regency of three as a good solution. The need was for one man acceptable to all parties, and not three, two of whom might be suspected by one side or the other. In any case the Archbishop would refuse a Regency of three. The Foreign Office thought that if the King, who alone had legal authority to appoint a Regent, refused, we should have to work for some kind of special appointment for the Archbishop.

- Mr. Eden also considered that the acceptance of the Regency proposal was desirable because it would be supported by American opinion. Lord Halifax, in a telegram of December 17, had referred to three factors affecting this opinion. One was Mr. Stettinius's statement of December 5.¹ Mr. Stettinius told Lord Halifax for the first time on December 17 that this statement had the full backing of the President. The two other factors were (i) the difference between our own and the American view of the size, importance, and character of E.A.M.—E.L.A.S. Our version of the facts was largely disbelieved; (ii) in the absence of any official statement on the American side, public comment was largely emotional, and affected by suspicions of British desires to restore monarchies and establish spheres of influence. On the other hand the establishment of a regency would be well received; a statement by the King that he would not return unless summoned by a plebiscite would be even more welcomed.

¹ This statement, which was concerned primarily with Italian affairs, did not mention Greece by name, but made an unmistakable criticism of British policy by describing the American view that the Governments of the United Nations in their liberated territories should 'work out their problems of Government on democratic lines without interference from outside'. For the British protests against this statement, (which was at once publicised by E.A.M.) see below, pp. 460-64.

Mr. Stettinius had been appointed U.S. Secretary of State after Mr. Hull's resignation on November 27, 1944, owing to a breakdown in health. As Under-Secretary, in a memorandum of November 8, 1944, on American interests and policy in east and south-east Europe and the Near East, he had included a caution that 'while the Government of the United States is fully aware of the existence of problems between Great Britain and the Soviet Union, this Government should not assume the attitude of supporting either country as against the other. Rather, this Government . . . should not assume that the American interest requires it at this time to identify its interests with those of either the Soviet Union or Great Britain.' *F.R.U.S.* 1944, IV, 1025.

(a) R20996/745/19; R21030/9/19. (b) R21170/8631/19.

President Roosevelt had telegraphed to the Prime Minister to (a) this effect about the situation on December 13:

‘ . . . As anxious as I am to be of the greatest help to you in this trying situation, there are limitations imposed in part by the traditional policies of the United States and in part by the mounting adverse reaction of public opinion in this country. No one will understand better than yourself that I, both personally and as Head of State, am necessarily responsive to the state of public feeling. It is for these reasons that it has not been possible for this Government to take a stand along with you in the present course of events in Greece. Even an attempt to do so would bring only temporary value to you and would in the long run do injury to our basic relationships. I don't need to tell you how much I dislike this state of affairs as between you and me. My one hope is to see it rectified so we can go along in this as in everything, shoulder to shoulder. I know that you, as the one on whom the responsibility rests, desire with all your heart a satisfactory solution of the Greek problem and particularly one that will bring peace to that ravished country. I will be with you wholeheartedly in any solution which takes into consideration the factors I have mentioned above. With this in mind I am giving you at random some thoughts that have come to me in my anxious desire to be of help.

I know that you have sent Macmillan there with broad powers to find such a solution and it may be that he will have been successful before you get this. I of course lack full details and am at a great distance from the scene, but it has seemed to me that a basic reason or excuse, perhaps, for the E.A.M. attitude has been distrust regarding the intentions of King George. I wonder if Macmillan's efforts might not be greatly facilitated if the King himself would approve the establishment of a Regency in Greece and would make a public declaration of his intentions not to return unless called for by popular plebiscite. This might be particularly effective if accompanied by an assurance that elections will be held at some fixed date, no matter how far in the future, when the people would have full opportunity to express themselves.¹

Meanwhile, might it not be possible to secure general agreement on the disarmament and dissolution of all the armed groups now in the country, including the mountain brigade and the sacred battalion, leaving your troops to preserve law and order alone until the

¹ Sir O. Sargent commented on the President's suggestion that the King should be asked to make a public declaration of his intention not to return unless called for by a plebiscite. He thought that this suggestion came ill from the President; when the Foreign Office had asked the King a year ago in Cairo to do this, he had refused, largely because the President advised him not to give way to British pressure. Sir O. Sargent thought that it was enough for the present if the King agreed to a Regency. He doubted whether the Foreign Office could expect him to make this further sacrifice on a point to which they knew he attached the utmost importance.

(a) T2354/4, No. 673 (Churchill Papers/212; R21013/9/19).

Greek national forces can be reconstituted on a non-partisan basis and adequately equipped.

I shall be turning over in my mind this whole question and hope you will share your thoughts and worries with me.'

The Prime Minister replied on December 14 with a message of thanks in which he said he would send a considered answer later. Meanwhile, the military position in Athens was improving; a British military withdrawal could have meant a fearful massacre in the city and the establishment of an extreme left-wing régime under Communist inspiration. Mr. Churchill added that 'the fact that you are supposed to be against us, in accordance with the last sentence of Stettinius press release, as I feared had added to our difficulties and burdens'. Three days later Mr. Churchill sent his 'considered answer' to the President, stating the position as it appeared to him:

(a) 'About Greece. The present position is that our representatives on the spot, Macmillan and Leeper, have strongly recommended the appointment of the Archbishop as Regent. This is obnoxious to the Papandreou Government, though they might be persuaded to advocate a Regency of three, namely the Archbishop, General Plastiras and Dragoumis. There is suspicion that the Archbishop is ambitious of obtaining chief political power and that, supported by E.A.M., he will use it ruthlessly against existing Ministers. Whether this is true or not I cannot say. The facts are changing from hour to hour. I do not feel at all sure that in setting up a one-man Regency we might not be imposing a dictatorship in Greece.

There is also to be considered the fact that the King refuses, I think inflexibly, to appoint a Regency, certainly not a one-man Regency of the Archbishop whom he distrusts and fears. According to the Greek constitution the Crown Prince is Regent in the absence of the King. The King also states that all his Ministers under Papandreou advise him against such a step and that, as a constitutional monarch, he cannot be responsible for it.

The War Cabinet decided to await for three or four days the course of military operations. Our reinforcements are arriving rapidly and the British General Staff Intelligence says that there are not more than twelve thousand E.L.A.S. in Athens and the Piraeus. The Greek King's estimate is fifteen to twenty-two thousand. Anyhow we shall, by the middle of next week, be far superior in numbers. I am not prepared, as at present informed, to give way to unconstitutional violence in such circumstances.

Our immediate task is to secure control of Athens and the Piraeus. According to the latest reports E.L.A.S. may agree to depart. This will give us a firm basis from which to negotiate the best settlement

(a) T2358/4 (Churchill Papers/212/12). (b) T2379/4, No. 855 (Churchill Papers/212/12; R21171/9/19).

possible between the warring Greek factions. It will certainly have to provide for the disarming of the guerrilla forces. The disarmament of the Greek Mountain Brigade, who took Rimini, and the Sacred Squadron, who have fought so well at the side of British and American troops, would seriously weaken our forces, and in any case we could not abandon them to massacre. They may however be removed elsewhere as part of a general settlement.

I am sure you would not wish us to cast down our painful and thankless task at this time. We embarked upon it with your full consent (see my No. 755 and your reply).¹ We desire nothing from Greece but to do our duty by the common cause. In the midst of our task of bringing food and relief and maintaining the rudiments of order for a Government which has no armed forces, we have become involved in a furious, though not as yet very bloody, struggle. I have felt it much that you were unable to give a word of explanation for our action but I understand your difficulties.

Meanwhile the Cabinet is united and the Socialist Ministers approve Mr. Bevin's declarations at the Labour Conference which, on this matter, endorsed the official platform by a majority of 2,455,000 votes to 137,000. I could at any time obtain, I believe, a ten to one majority in the House of Commons. I am sure you will do whatever you can. I will keep you constantly informed.'

The War Cabinet also considered that the Soviet Government should be kept informed of the course of events through the British Embassy in Moscow. The Soviet Government in fact maintained (a) the agreement that Greece should be within the British area of influence. They expressed no opinion on the British action in suppressing the revolt. According to telegrams from Moscow the Soviet press seemed to be trying to be impartial, and although there was some bias in favour of E.A.M., due weight was given to official British statements such as speeches in the House of Commons and General Scobie's communiqués.

In the afternoon of December 17 Mr. Macmillan reported that, (b) according to the Archbishop, Mr. Papandreou was proposing to telegraph again to the King recommending a sole Regency on grounds of Greek policy and not owing to Allied pressure. Mr. Macmillan added: 'We shall believe this telegram if and when we see the text.' The telegram had in fact not arrived on December 18 when the War Cabinet again considered the situation. The Prime Minister read a message from Field-Marshal Alexander that he had (c)

¹ These messages referred to the despatch of British troops to Greece at the time of the German withdrawal. See p. 410, note 1.

(a) R21174/9/19. (b) R21106/745/19. (c) WM(44)171.1, C.A.; R21899/9/19.

no immediate anxiety about the position in Athens. If the rebel resistance continued, he might have to send another infantry division to Athens, with serious consequences to the fighting on the Italian front. The Prime Minister said that the latest news available suggested a turn for the better. He then reported the continued opposition of the King to the appointment of a Regency. During the discussion, it was suggested that while the case for a Regency appeared a strong one, we needed to be more certain of the reliability of the Archbishop. Mr. Eden explained that he had been elected by a majority of votes to the see of Athens in the time of General Metaxas, but that the latter had refused to recognise the election. The Germans had turned out General Metaxas's nominee, and installed the present Archbishop, but his record from our point of view in dealing with the Axis authorities had been entirely satisfactory. He was not under the control of E.A.M., and was likely to resist further demands from them. After Mr. Eden had explained the objections to a Council of Regency of three, the War Cabinet decided to postpone a decision for two or three days in order to give time for an improvement in the military situation and in our bargaining position.¹

- (a) Mr. Macmillan and Mr. Leeper, however, continued to argue in favour of the immediate appointment of the Archbishop. They reported again on December 18 that M. Papandreou was in fact telegraphing to the King a recommendation in favour of the Regency on grounds of Greek policy and not of Allied pressure. They had also suggested the issue of a public statement on the appointment. On the morning of December 20 Mr. Eden informed Mr. (b) Macmillan and Mr. Leeper that M. Papandreou's telegram had not yet arrived, and that it was difficult to press the King further since, if his Ministers were not united in recommending him to do so, he would have strong grounds for refusing to appoint the Archbishop as Regent.² The War Cabinet had therefore decided to wait for a day or two before taking any action.³

- (c) ¹ In a telegram to Field-Marshal Alexander (who had supported the Regency proposal) on December 19 the Prime Minister said that the War Cabinet preferred to allow military operations for the clearing of Athens to continue for a time rather than to embark all our fortunes on the character of the Archbishop. 'It is a hard thing to ask me to throw over a constitutional King acting on the true advice of his Ministers, apart from British pressure, in order to install a dictator who may very likely become the champion of the extreme Left.'

² A draft by the Prime Minister had put the case more emphatically: 'I have not at all agreed to forcing a Regency, even a triple Regency, upon the King, nor is it clear how this could be done if he refused. I should not be able to take a position where we overthrew by violence a constitutional King acting on the free advice of his Ministers nor where we installed a Dictator, whether of the Right or the Left.'

³ On December 21 Mr. Macmillan sent a personal letter to Mr. Eden. He said that he and Field-Marshal Alexander agreed there was no military solution of the Greek problem.

(continued on page 423)

(a) R21181, 21232, 21233/9/19; R21300/273/19. (b) R21232/9/19. (c) T2397/4 (Churchill Papers/212; R21287/9/19).

On December 21 the Greek Ambassador informed the Foreign Office that M. Papandreou had telegraphed on the previous day to the King in favour of a Regency. It was not clear, however, whether the advice was that of M. Papandreou alone, or of the Greek Government. The War Cabinet therefore, at a meeting in the afternoon of December 21, decided to enquire from the King what advice he had received, but not at the moment to put any pressure on him. Mr. Howard¹ therefore went to see the King on the evening of December 21. It then appeared from the King's statements that he considered the majority of the Greek Government, including M. Papandreou, were opposed to the Regency, and that the King himself would be most unwilling to agree to it even under great pressure.²

The Greek Ambassador, however, told Sir O. Sargent on the morning of December 22 that M. Papandreou's advice in his telegram was given after a satisfactory interview with the Archbishop, and that it was definitely and unconditionally in favour of a sole Regency. In view of the Ambassador's statement the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden saw the King on December 22 and made another attempt to persuade him to appoint the Archbishop as Regent. The King remained stubbornly unwilling to agree, and, in fact, was not candid in his references to M. Papandreou's changed attitude towards the appointment. On the other hand he made one concession by saying that he considered himself bound by a pledge which he had given in July or August 1943, not to return to Greece until the Greek people had expressed their will.³

On December 24, 1944, the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden decided to go to Athens. They arrived on December 25. The Prime Minister, in a message to President Roosevelt on December 26, said that the basis of their action would be that the King should not go back to Greece until a plebiscite had been taken in favour of his return. The Prime Minister added:

(continued)

It could be solved only by a political agreement, and for this reason a regency of the Archbishop was essential. Mr. Macmillan was not quite certain whether there was as much opposition to E.A.M./E.L.A.S. as many supposed. He was sure that there was a large amount of sympathy with E.A.M. in Greece, and also that 'a moderate, reasonable progressive policy could detach the vague, radical element from the hard Communist core'. H. Macmillan, *The Blast of War, 1939-45* (Macmillan, 1967), 622.

¹ Head of the Southern Department of the Foreign Office, 1941-5.

² It was clear later to the Foreign Office that the King's statements with regard to the advice he had received from M. Papandreou were definitely misleading, and that the King also made misleading statements to Mr. Eden on December 22.

³ Sir A. Cadogan noted on the report of the discussion that the King had never given any such pledge. Mr. Eden had tried in December 1943 to persuade him to do so, but 'the pitch was queered by the President and Field-Marshal Smuts, as the King himself must well remember'.

(a) WM(44)173.2, C.A.; R21579/745/19. (b) R21830/9/19. (c) R21719/745/19.
(d) T2430/4, No. 858 (Churchill Papers/213; R22020/745/19).

‘For the rest, we cannot abandon those who have taken up arms in our cause, and must, if necessary, fight it out with them. It must always be understood that we seek nothing from Greece, in territory or advantages. We have given much and will give more if it is in our power. I count on you to help us in this time of unusual difficulty. In particular I should like you to tell your Ambassador in Athens to make contact with us and to help all he can in accordance with the above principles.’

- (a) The President replied at once that he had asked the Ambassador to call on the Prime Minister as soon as possible, and that he (Mr. Roosevelt) was ready to give all possible assistance.

(v)

The Prime Minister's and Mr. Eden's conversations in Athens: conference of Greek leaders at Athens, December 25-7, 1944: unanimous decision in favour of a Regency: unacceptable demands of E.A.M.: report of the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden to the War Cabinet and the decision to recommend a Regency to the King: the King's acceptance of the proposal (December 25-31, 1944).

- (b) On December 25 the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden met Field-Marshal Alexander, Mr. Macmillan and Mr. Leeper in the Prime Minister's aircraft at Kalamiki airfield, Athens. Field-Marshal Alexander said that the military situation in Athens had improved, but that behind the E.L.A.S. units there was an unexpectedly strong core of Communist resistance which would be difficult to eradicate even after we had driven the rebels out of Attica. The Prime Minister said that His Majesty's Government did not intend to get involved indefinitely in Greek civil strife, but could not leave Greece except with honour and protection for Greeks who had helped us. This would mean that there would have to be a national Greek army under the Greek Government. The Prime Minister then said that the King would not agree to appoint a Regent. Mr. Macmillan told the Prime Minister that in view of the King's attitude, he and Mr. Leeper and Field-Marshal Alexander proposed a conference of all political leaders which E.L.A.S. would be invited to attend. The Prime Minister and Mr. Eden supported this proposal, and agreed that E.L.A.S. should be invited if only to split the good from the bad in its ranks, and that the Archbishop might be chairman.
- (c) M. Papandreou, and later the Archbishop, called on Mr. Churchill and Mr. Eden on board H.M.S. *Ajax* at 7 p.m. on December 25. Field-Marshal Alexander, Mr. Macmillan and Mr. Leeper were

(a) T2435A/4, No. 680 (Churchill Papers/213; R22020/745/19. (b) R226/4/19. (1945).
 (c) Tel. Mason 5 (R21717/9/19; Churchill Papers/213).

present at these meetings, at which a statement to the Press was approved and a message to E.L.A.S. Central Committee drawn up. The Archbishop spoke with great bitterness of the atrocities of E.L.A.S. and the 'dark sinister hand' behind E.A.M. In a telegram to Mr. Attlee, the Chiefs of Staff Committee and the Foreign Office, Mr. Churchill said:

'Listening to him it is impossible to doubt that he greatly feared the Communist, or Trotskyite as we call it, combination in Greek affairs. He told us that he had issued an encyclical to-day condemning the E.L.A.S. crowd for taking 8,000 hostages, middle-class people, many of them women, and shooting a few every day, and that he had said he would report these matters to the press of the world if the women were not released. After some wrangling, he understood that the women would be released. Generally he impressed me with a good deal of confidence. He is a magnificent figure, and he immediately accepted the proposal of being Chairman of the conference.'

The Prime Minister continued that he could not foretell what might come out of the conference. If E.L.A.S. accepted the invitation, he did not rate highly the chance of forming a united Government.

'I was impressed, especially from what the Archbishop said, by the intensity of hatred for the Communists in the country. We had no doubt of this before we came here. It has been confirmed by all we have heard so far. There is no doubt how the people of Athens would vote if they had a chance, and we must keep the possibility of getting them that chance steadily in view.'

On December 25 a statement was issued at Athens that Mr. Churchill and Mr. Eden proposed to convene a conference representing as far as possible Greek political opinion. The object of the conference was to end the civil war and enable Greece to resume her place among the United Nations. The E.L.A.S. central committee was being invited to send delegates.

The Prime Minister and Mr. Eden came into Athens on December (a) 26, and were told that E.L.A.S. representatives would attend the conference. E.L.A.S. later sent a message that their representatives would not be able to arrive before 5 p.m. Meanwhile the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden had further discussions with the Archbishop. The Prime Minister said that if it proved impossible to reach agreement at the conference, they must consider steps to establish order and security in Athens after British and Greek troops had cleared out E.L.A.S. He suggested a governing committee or Council of State of the best men available. The authority of Great Britain, the United

(a) R226/14/19.

States, the U.S.S.R. and France might be sought as the foundation of action; these Powers would have to be asked to agree to appoint a Commission in Athens, under which the Council of State would carry out the functions of government. The Council would have to reinforce itself by a plebiscite or mandate of some kind, based on universal suffrage in the city and on secret ballot. The Prime Minister, with the Archbishop's agreement, considered it inadvisable to associate the Communists too closely with any arrangements.

The United States Ambassador and the French Minister agreed to attend the conference as observers. The Russian military representative also agreed after obtaining authority from his commanding officer in Belgrade. At 5 p.m. the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden, Field-Marshal Alexander, Mr. Macmillan, Mr. Leeper and General Scobie, with the three Allied representatives, went to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where M. Papandreou and the other Greek political leaders were assembled. The E.L.A.S. representatives had not appeared. The Archbishop took the chair and said a few words before inviting Mr. Churchill to address the meeting. Mr. Churchill had been speaking only a short while in explanation of British policy when a message came that the E.L.A.S. representatives had arrived. The proceedings then began.

(a) Shortly after the Prime Minister's speech he and the other British representatives and the three observers withdrew, in order to leave the Archbishop to preside over a purely Greek meeting. On the next morning the Archbishop gave an account of the proceedings to Mr. Eden, Mr. Macmillan and Mr. Leeper. He had begun by asking the Greek delegates to address themselves solely to the future of Greece, but they had not done so. The Secretary of the Communist Party, M. Siantos, had attacked the Government violently, and had held them responsible for the bloodshed. He said that E.L.A.S. represented the whole of the people, and that they were prepared to fight for forty years for their liberties. General Plastiras then made a fierce reply that the Communists had not liberated but destroyed Greece. M. Kaphandaris (Progressive Party) tried to calm matters by taking a middle course and pointing out that there was no one to act as Head of the State to regulate the present difficulties. He proposed a Regency, and the Communists at once supported him. Other party leaders also approved of the proposal. General Plastiras accepted it, but again caused an uproar by an attack on the Communists. After order had been restored, M. Papandreou made a long defence of his administration. He said that he had made repeated concessions to the Communists, particularly with regard to the demobilisation issue; for instance in preparing lists of officers for the new Regular

(a) R21853/9/19.

Army he had submitted the names to the Headquarters of the Communist Party for approval. Out of 280 names submitted, they had objected to 270. He mentioned other similar concessions to the Communists. The Communists however persisted that they would never hand in their arms to the Government then in power or to British troops; they would also refuse to be disarmed until the Mountain Brigade and Sacred Battalion had first surrendered their arms.

In the Archbishop's view, the debate showed that the E.A.M. members formed a solid front while the anti-Communist parties were divided. Nevertheless the Communists wanted a way out in spite of their brave words, and would like to see the war ended. They would struggle hard for a favourable political position in order to achieve their ends by other means. The solution which they would prefer would be a coalition Government formed on traditional lines and containing representatives of all political parties and groups. They would hope, by following a consistent and determined policy among their vacillating colleagues, gradually to obtain political control. The Archbishop thought that, apart from the extreme Communists, many people shared the fear of the Left of a royalist *coup d'état* leading to dictatorship and reprisals. The Government of M. Papandreou was dead; M. Papandreou himself recognised that he could not carry on.

The Archbishop recommended a Regency, because the functions of the Head of the State had to be carried out if the crisis were to be solved. The acting Head of the State should try to create a small government representative of Greek public feeling. The only shade of opinion to be excluded should be the regular official Communist Party. Such a government would allay fears of reprisals. The Archbishop indicated that General Plastiras would be the head of the government. At the suggestion of Mr. Eden, he promised to try to obtain from the conference later on December 27 recommendations about a Regency and a new Government. Mr. Eden suggested that the Archbishop should try also to keep the conference nominally in being, and that he should end the proceedings by adjournment rather than dissolution.

The second meeting of the conference opened at 11 a.m. on December 27 and lasted until 4 p.m. The Prime Minister and Mr. Eden did not receive an account of the meeting until 5.30 p.m. Meanwhile the Prime Minister explained the situation to Mr. (a) MacVeagh, the United States Ambassador, and convinced him that a Regency under the Archbishop was the only course open at that moment. The Prime Minister then held a press conference at the

(a) R226/4/19.

British Embassy. He raised two questions: (i) ought British forces to have gone to Greece? (ii) what ought we to have done when civil war broke out? Mr. Churchill said that President Roosevelt and Marshal Stalin had agreed that British forces should come in on the tail of the Germans to help push them out, and ensure the supply and distribution of food. He mentioned the military conference at Caserta, and the invitation from a Greek Government which represented all political parties, including Communists and E.A.M. He believed that there would have been a massacre in Athens but for British intervention. He said that Great Britain sought nothing from Greece, and wanted neither territory nor bases. 'As for money, we would rather give it than take it. There is nothing we want of any kind from Greece except her friendship.'

Mr. Churchill said that British forces had driven the rebels from the centre of the city, and that there were enough troops in Athens or on the way to get control of the city and the surrounding territory. If they withdrew, there would be savage reprisals against Greeks friendly to Great Britain. British forces would not leave until there were guarantees for a fair Government which would not pay off old scores. Mr. Churchill concluded by referring to the 'very simple reasons' which had led Mr. Eden and himself to come in order to 'get started some sensible settlement which could easily be reached in any country where people did not feel their politics so intensely that they might ruin themselves thereby'.

He then answered questions. He was asked whether there would be an amnesty for E.L.A.S. leaders. He said that if fighting ceased there ought not to be a proscription either way. If agreement were not reached, the troops would clear the Athens area and establish peace, security and order in Attica. It would then have to be seen whether a vote could be taken. He and the President and Marshal Stalin would meet and review the situation. If a democratic government could not be established, an international trusteeship might be necessary. He was asked what he considered to be at the bottom of the crisis, and he replied: 'I have a very clear idea. But I do not want to use language which might give offence to any section in Greece at the moment.' Finally he was asked about the King's attitude to a Regency. He said that he hoped the King would accept such a course if it were shown to be the wish of all parties or nearly all parties. He was sure that the King would not return unless a plebiscite showed that the people wanted him to do so.

- (a) The Archbishop told the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden, after the conference was over, that the question of a Regency had again been raised. After much discussion all present were in favour of it. The

(a) R21937/745/19.

E.L.A.S. representatives had then been questioned, in order that their views on other matters should be made clear to all present. They asked for

- (i) The punishment of collaborators, not only those who had collaborated with the Germans, but those who had served the Metaxas dictatorship.
- (ii) A 'purge' of the Civil Service.
- (iii) The dissolution of the gendarmerie and its replacement by a National Guard.
- (iv) A 'purge' of certain elements in the city police.
- (v) A 'purge' of the army not on professional but on political grounds.
- (vi) The formation of a new Government in which E.A.M.—E.L.A.S. should have up to a half-share. Their immediate demand was for the Ministries of the Interior and of Justice, and for the Under-Secretaries of War and Foreign Affairs, with some other posts.
- (vii) An immediate plebiscite on the constitutional question.¹
- (viii) Elections for a Chamber in April.

The meeting felt that such terms were unacceptable. The Archbishop thought that it would be a criminal act to agree to them, since it would mean handing over Greece to E.A.M.—E.L.A.S. control, although they only represented a small part of the Greek people. He had therefore adjourned the meeting and said that he would call a further session when he thought fit. He now proposed (a) to the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden the establishment of a Regency and a new Government formed of persons of general confidence, including Left-wing representatives other than Communists. If this were done and Attica cleared, a further conference might be called with a reasonable chance of a settlement, since E.L.A.S. would realise that they were faced with formidable opposition.

Mr. Churchill said that His Majesty's Government would try once again to overcome the King's scruples, but if he refused it was difficult to see how a Regency could be achieved legally. A revolutionary procedure was always a possibility, but had its weakness especially if—as was inevitable—a long term elapsed before elections could be held. He asked what the Archbishop suggested should be done if the King continued to refuse a Regency. The Archbishop said that the Greeks would have to find their solution alone.

It was finally agreed with the Archbishop that Mr. Churchill and

¹ The Archbishop explained that this would mean holding the plebiscite at a time when the E.L.A.S. still dominated the countryside.

(a) R21926/9/16.

Mr. Eden would urge the King to set up a Regency for a year or until a plebiscite could be held under normal conditions of tranquillity, whichever period should be less. They would ask for President Roosevelt's support. At the second meeting of the conference, M. Papandreou had said that he would advise the King to establish a Regency. Mr. Macmillan and Mr. Leeper were to see him at once, and urge him to send clear advice in this sense to the King. When asked whether he would accept the Regency if it were offered to him, the Archbishop said that he would accept it.

If the King refused the advice given to him, it was agreed that alternative steps would have to be considered conferring the powers of Regent on the Archbishop, e.g. under a mandate from the three Great Powers, or by a declaration of the Conference of Greeks or another body. The British Government would endorse such a declaration, and the United States Government might support it. Meanwhile, British operations would continue until E.L.A.S. accepted General Scobie's terms, or the Athens area were freed. The Prime Minister made it clear that we could not commit ourselves to military operations after the clearing of Attica, although we would try to keep British forces in Greece until a Greek national army was formed.

- (a) The Archbishop said that he did not intend to include Communists in the Government. He thought that the setting up of a Regency and a small representative Government would split the E.A.M. moderates from the extremists. The Prime Minister then explained that two of the E.L.A.S. delegates to the conference had asked to see him. The Archbishop opposed the request, and the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden deferred to him in view of his forthcoming responsibilities.
- (b) At 7 p.m., therefore, the Prime Minister sent the two E.L.A.S. delegates this letter:

'I have received your request that I should meet you both privately. Although personally I should have been willing to comply, I feel that the Conference being wholly Greek in character does not make it desirable for me to be involved in what might seem to be negotiations apart from the Conference, at whose disposal as a whole I and my colleagues have placed ourselves.

Let me add my fervent hope that the discussions which have taken place and the contacts which have been made will result in a speedy end to the melancholy conflict proceeding between men of one country.'

In conclusion, the Prime Minister asked the Archbishop for an assurance that, if he became Regent, the safety of M. Papandreou and his supporters would be guaranteed by any new Government. The Archbishop gave this guarantee.

(a) R21927/9/19. (b) R21928/9/19.

The Prime Minister and Mr. Eden returned to London on December 28. On the following day the Prime Minister told the War Cabinet that he was satisfied that the advice sent by our representatives in Athens had been correct. There would have been a massacre if we had not intervened. British forces now held five-sixths of the Piraeus and about three-quarters of Athens, which contained more than one-seventh of the population of Greece. This progress had eased the situation. British troops felt strongly that the change from the original friendly and welcoming attitude of the people of Athens had been due to the organised infiltration of elements of a different character from outside the city. He had asked President Roosevelt to help us persuade the King to appoint Archbishop Damaskinos as Regent.¹ The President had sent a message to the King accordingly, and had also suggested that he should give an assurance that elections would be held at some fixed date.

The Prime Minister had said that he was satisfied that the case for a Regency was decisive, and that the only man for a Regency was the Archbishop. He gave an account of the conference, and said that M. Papandreou, after changing his mind three times, had telegraphed to the King advising the appointment of a Regent and the selection of the Archbishop. The Prime Minister explained that the Archbishop had made a most favourable impression, and that he was 'shrewd, able and forthcoming'. The state of anarchy in Athens showed that a strong hand was required. The Archbishop was anti-Communist. He considered that an executive body was needed which could get an army together and act as a government. He had in view a small Cabinet of the best men, including responsible left-wing leaders other than Communists. He might be able to broaden the Government in a few weeks' time. The Prime Minister had not thought it right to press the Archbishop about the composition of his Government, but it was clear that he had in mind as his Prime Minister General Plastiras, who had impressed Mr. Churchill as a 'grim, thin man of the utmost determination'.

Mr. Churchill and Mr. Eden then recommended to the War Cabinet that the Greek King should be told immediately of the Prime Minister's views of the situation, and of the view of His Majesty's Government that he should appoint Archbishop Damaskinos as Regent at once. If the King would not do so, he should be warned of our intention to advise the Archbishop to go forward as though the King had appointed him. We would recognise the Archbishop as Regent, and also recognise a Government by

¹ The Prime Minister telegraphed to the President on December 28 an account of his visit. (b)

(a) WM(44) 175, C.A.: R197/4/19. (b) T2436, 2438/4, Nos. 859-60 (Churchill Papers/213; R22027/745/19).

him. The King should be told that we knew of President Roosevelt's message to him, and did not doubt that the United States Government—and other Powers—would follow our lead. In the view of the Prime Minister, the King had a great opportunity to make a dignified gesture by appointing the Archbishop as Regent on terms that would reflect credit on himself, and possibly strengthen his position. In a year the Archbishop would have need of the King's support, while the views he had expressed about the King and monarchy were reassuring.

Mr. Eden supported Mr. Churchill's statement to the War Cabinet. The latter took note that E.L.A.S. and E.A.M. had adopted an uncompromising attitude. The terms which they had demanded would enable them to wreck any government, and the offices for which they had asked were the same as those which the Lublin Poles had asked for in the Polish Government. It was pointed out in discussion that, if affairs in Greece worked out as we hoped, the effect might be to stop much anarchy in Europe, and discourage similar outbreaks in other countries. The War Cabinet approved the actions of the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden in Athens, and asked them to approach the King as they had suggested.

- (a) The Prime Minister and Mr. Eden saw the King on December 29. On the next day they were able to tell the War Cabinet that he had now agreed to issue a declaration appointing Archbishop Damaskinos as Regent during the emergency and stating that he (the King) was resolved not to return to Greece unless summoned by a free and fair expression of the national will. It was hoped that this declaration might be published in Athens that afternoon. The discussion with the King had started at 10 p.m. and ended at 4.30 a.m. The King had wanted to be informed of the Archbishop's views and intentions. It was made clear to him that, without reference to the Archbishop, we could not give undertakings about his policy. A private and confidential note had however been drawn up for the King setting out the views which the Archbishop had expressed to Mr. Churchill and Mr. Eden in Athens.
- (b) The War Cabinet also considered a telegram from the Consul-General at Salonika asking for information about policy in Macedonia and Thrace. The Prime Minister's insistence on clearing Athens without specific reference to the rest of Greece had led the anti-Communist elements in Salonika to fear acquiescence in E.L.A.S. domination in Salonika. The Consul-General suggested that we should aim at peaceful dispersion rather than any formal act of disbandment of E.L.A.S. or at a combination of the two, since

(a) WM(44)176.1, C.A.; R112, 475/4/19; R22062/745/19. (b) R22023/1009/67.

many E.L.A.S. officers and men were anxious to quit the organisation. He suggested that preliminary plans should be made to break up E.L.A.S. by encouraging desertion on favourable terms. The War Cabinet approved this course. Finally, the Prime Minister read to the War Cabinet the text of a draft telegram to President Roosevelt reporting the King's agreement and the effort necessary to attain it. (a)

The formal appointment of the Archbishop as Regent was announced by the King on December 30. On January 1 Mr. Leeper reported that the King had telegraphed to M. Papandreou an account of his conversation with Mr. Churchill and Mr. Eden. He said that they had assured him that the Archbishop was hostile to the insurgents; that he did not intend that the Communists or even E.A.M. should be represented in the new Government, and that he would allow no discussions with the rebels until they had laid down their arms. The Regency would be short, and would last until the restoration of order. The Regent would be in close contact with the King and would pay attention to his directives. The British were determined to restore order in Attica and the capital. There was to be a force of 100,000 men, and British war material would be supplied to equip the Greek national army. In view of these considerations, the King had delegated his royal duties to the Archbishop until the end of the emergency. The King had asked that the leaders of the political parties and General Plastiras should be informed of the telegram. M. Papandreou had carried out these instructions, with the result that the contents of the King's telegram had appeared in the Greek press on the morning of January 1. The Archbishop was therefore greatly embarrassed in his task of forming a Government. Mr. Eden replied to Mr. Leeper on January 2 that the King's version of the note given to him was inaccurate. The Prime Minister and Mr. Eden had not told the King that the Archbishop would include no E.A.M. representatives in the new Government or that he would maintain close contact with the King and accept his directives. (b)

Mr. Eden brought the King's action to the notice of the War Cabinet. He read the draft of his proposed telegram to Mr. Leeper and explained that there was no foundation for the King's statements. The Prime Minister took a serious view of the King's action. The message to M. Papandreou was a garbled version of the note given to the King, and might cause serious misunderstanding in Great Britain and the United States as well as in Greece. The disclosure of the note was itself a breach of the understanding on which it had been given to the King. We should have to make clear to the (c)

(a) T2449, 2450/4, Nos. 864-5 (Churchill Papers/213; R22062/745/19). (b) R79, 129, 277/4/19. (c) WM(45)1.6, C.A.; R476/4/19.

King our view of his action in releasing it. The Prime Minister thought that messages from the King should now be controlled. The Archbishop should be told the facts and given for his own information the text of the note handed to the King. The War Cabinet agreed with the Prime Minister's view.¹

- (a) On January 3 Mr. Eden had an audience with the King. The King agreed that he had promised not to telegraph the note to Athens or give it any publicity; he said that he had locked it away and shown it to no one. Mr. Eden then gave an account of developments in Athens following the King's telegram; he showed the King the summary of the latter's message which the Foreign Office had received from Mr. Leeper. The King said that his telegram to M. Papandreou had been in reply to an earlier telegram from the latter at the time of the departure of Mr. Churchill and Mr. Eden for Greece. This telegram had reported a long explanation by the Archbishop to M. Papandreou of his views on Greek policy and how he proposed to conduct the Regency. The King said that the contents of his telegram to M. Papandreou were not what Mr. Churchill and Mr. Eden had said to him, but his reply to M. Papandreou's telegram and a commentary on the Archbishop's remarks at that time. He said that in any case Mr. Leeper's summary was an inaccurate account of this telegram.

Mr. Eden pointed out that Mr. Leeper's account of the message attributed the statements to the Prime Minister and himself. The King's message and M. Papandreou's use of it had confused the situation in Athens, and the Prime Minister and the War Cabinet were disturbed over the matter. The King must agree not to send any messages to anyone in Greece except the Regent. The King said that he would be glad to communicate only with the Regent once the latter had assumed his duties, but he had had no messages from him saying that he had done so. Mr. Eden said that some days ago we had received a copy of the Regent's reply to the King. He gave the King a copy of this reply.² Mr. Eden subsequently told Mr. Leeper that his impression was that the King would 'do nothing to smooth the Archbishop's path that he is not compelled to do and would be ready enough to put a boulder or two in it'. Mr. Eden was aware from other sources that the King's statements were not true.

¹ The War Cabinet also accepted the Prime Minister's suggestion that M. Papandreou should have facilities to go to Cairo if he wished. They considered that he had done his best to deal with an uncontrollable situation.

- (b) ² Mr. Leeper had sent a translation of the Archbishop's reply on December 31. The Archbishop had assured the King that he would take 'all measures indicated by the circumstances for the restoration of internal order and peace, and thereafter for the free expression of the will of the Greek people on all questions outstanding in such a manner as may never be slandered or disputed in any respect'.

(a) R277/4/19. (b) R38/4/19.

The King's message to M. Papandreou had not been in reply to a telegram from Athens, but had been a report of his interview with Mr. Churchill and Mr. Eden on December 29. Apart from one or two details, his message corresponded closely with Mr. Leeper's summary.

(vi)

The question of the hostages taken by E.L.A.S.: the Varkiza agreement of February 3, 1945: continuance of political and economic difficulties in Greece.

At the request of the Regent General Plastiras took office as Prime Minister on January 3, 1945. The outer areas of Athens had not been completely cleared of the rebels, but by the morning of January 6 the E.L.A.S. forces had withdrawn, and the main fighting was now at an end.¹ A delegation of the rebels came to General Scobie's headquarters on January 9 with powers to conclude an armistice. General Scobie's terms of December no longer applied, since British (a) troops had already advanced beyond the borders of Attica. He now asked for the withdrawal of E.L.A.S. to a line running north and west of Volos, Lamia, and Itea, the evacuation of the northern Peloponnese and an area round Salonika, which included the aerodrome, and the immediate release of all prisoners of war and hostages. The withdrawal lines were chosen to allow the British troops a strong military corridor east and west across the centre of Greece. E.L.A.S. were willing to accept these territorial requirements, and to release British prisoners, but not to hand over the 15–20,000 civilian hostages—mainly women and elderly men of bourgeois families seized during the E.L.A.S. retreat from Athens. Their pretext was that many of these hostages were former 'collaborators'; in fact, the rebel leaders kept them as a bargaining card for their safety in the negotiations which would follow the conclusion of a military truce.

The War Cabinet considered the E.A.M. approach on January 10. (b) Mr. Eden said that he had already sent a telegram to Greece on the importance of taking the chance to end the fighting, but he was still anxious that our representatives should not miss the occasion by trying to get too much. The War Cabinet agreed that another telegram in this sense should be sent to Greece. They had in mind, however, the territorial terms, namely the size of the corridor from which we were requiring E.L.A.S. to withdraw. The War Cabinet

¹ The British losses in the fighting had been 25 officers and 179 other ranks killed, 73 officers and 874 other ranks wounded, and 20 officers and 644 other ranks missing. Most of the missing had been taken prisoner by the rebels, and subsequently returned.

(a) R765, 716, 777/4/19; R653/185/44. (b) WM(45)4.2, C.A.

did not suppose that the British representatives would give way over the question of hostages.¹ Since, however, this was the point on which E.L.A.S. held firm, General Scobie decided that, rather than risk a breach in the negotiations, he would not insist upon the return of the hostages.

- (a) The War Cabinet discussed this omission on January 12. The Prime Minister thought that we could not honourably desert the hostages. He suggested that we should publicly accept the truce terms, and at the same time make a statement that the taking and holding of hostages was a barbarous custom condemned by international law, and that no truce could be lasting until the hostages had been released. We should also say that their release should be accompanied by some guarantee of immunity for persons on the rebel side who were not guilty of acts contrary to the rules of war or amenable to the criminal codes of civilised countries. The War Cabinet thought that an announcement should be made at once to the press in these terms, and that we should make it clear that unless the hostages were released, the truce could not be maintained.

The Regent and General Plastiras had also been dismayed at the terms of a truce which left the hostages, and half of the country, in the hands of E.A.M.-E.L.A.S. The Regent, after conferring with Mr. Leeper and General Scobie, had issued a statement that he was shocked at the refusal of E.L.A.S. to release the hostages, but that if the E.L.A.S. central committee felt that they could 'assist in a re-establishment of law and order such as should exist in a civilised State', he would be ready to facilitate agreement between them and representatives of the Greek Government.

This invitation led to a conference between the representatives of the Greek Government and those of E.A.M. and E.L.A.S. at Varkiza, near Athens, on February 3. Before this conference took place the facts about the behaviour of the rebels, and of E.A.M.-E.L.A.S. generally, became better known in Great Britain. During the period of fighting in Athens there had been strong criticism of British policy. The 'build up' of resistance movements by the European news service of the B.B.C. had given an idealistic picture of E.A.M.-E.L.A.S. The press in general—including *The Times*—had taken a similar line, and the British Embassy at Athens had complained of the reports sent home by journalists there. There had been attacks on British policy in Parliament and at the annual conference of the Labour Party. Mr. Churchill in the House of Commons and Mr. Bevin at the Labour Party conference had defended the action

¹ In a minute of January 7 to Mr. Eden the Prime Minister had written: 'Delivery of hostages and prisoners would surely follow automatically on a truce.'

(a) WM(45)5.1, C.A.; R1204/4/19.

of the Government, but the British Embassy in Athens had evidence that E.A.M.-E.L.A.S. had been counting upon concessions in order to meet left-wing criticism in Great Britain which might otherwise bring about the fall of the Government.

The facts about E.L.A.S. terrorism and the treatment of the hostages now became more generally known not only through statements in Parliament, but as a result of information brought by British prisoners and by British troops generally who had taken part in the fighting. Hence at the time of the Varkiza Conference there was considerable change in the attitude of British and American opinion. The retention of the hostages was criticised even by those who had previously supported E.A.M.

The Prime Minister made two statements about Greece at the (a) Yalta Conference. He said that he hoped for an early peace on the basis of an amnesty except for acts contrary to the laws of war. He doubted whether a Government of all parties could be formed in Greece owing to the violence of political hatreds, but he wanted elections to be held as soon as possible, and invited Stalin to send observers to Greece. Stalin said that he had complete confidence in British policy in Greece and did not wish to interfere. President Roosevelt took no part in the discussion.

In his report on the Conference to the War Cabinet on February (b) 19 Mr. Churchill said that the Russian attitude towards Greece had been most satisfactory. Stalin had not criticised our policy, but had been friendly and even jocular in discussing it. He had asked for more information and arrangements had been made to let him have a full statement. The Russians had accepted our position in Greece. Mr. Churchill understood that the emissary sent to Moscow by the Greek Communists had first been put under house arrest and then returned. The Russian press had not criticised us, and the Russian conduct on the matter had confirmed Mr. Churchill's view that when they made a bargain they desired to keep it.

The Varkiza Agreement, signed on February 13 after ten days of (c) negotiation, provided for the immediate return of the hostages and an amnesty for political crimes committed since December 3, 1944, but not for common law crimes against life and property which were 'not absolutely necessary' for the attainment of a political end.¹ E.L.A.S. and its armed 'police' were to be demobilised at once and to surrender their arms. A new national army was to be formed by

¹ Some of the worst offenders in the E.L.A.S. forces escaped into the hills. The chief criminal was Ares Velouhiotis who was believed by a British liaison officer to have murdered many people (including girls) with his own hands. He was killed in June during a fight with government forces in the Pindus mountains.

(a) WP(45)157; R3247, 3460/4/19. (b) WM(45)22.1, C.A. (c) R3056/4/19.

calling up certain age groups, and the city police, the gendarmerie and the civil service 'purged' of 'undesirable' elements, and especially collaborators with the enemy. Civil liberties under the 1911 constitution of Greece were to be restored, though certain important rights—e.g. the right of assembly and trial by jury for political offences—were temporarily suspended. No prisoners, however, could be kept in custody for more than six months without trial.

- (a) The Prime Minister and Mr. Eden¹ paid a short visit to Athens on February 14–15, 1945, on their way back from the Yalta Conference. Mr. Eden discussed future policy in Greece with Mr. Macmillan, Field-Marshal Alexander and Mr. Leeper. On March 5 Mr. Eden submitted to the War Cabinet the conclusions reached in these discussions. They suggested the maintenance of a British garrison for some time in Greece. Until the E.A.M.—E.L.A.S. forces had been disarmed, and a new Greek National Guard established, this force would have to be about 2–3 divisions strong. One division would probably be enough after June. British guidance would also be necessary in almost every branch of the administration, and in finding ways of dealing with the most urgent currency and other
- (b) economic problems. The War Cabinet accepted these conclusions on March 12.
- (c) On April 18, however, Mr. Macmillan considered that it would be desirable to keep two divisions in Greece until after the elections and the plebiscite on the régime. The electoral rolls could not be ready before November 1945. The parties were unlikely to attempt a *coup d'état* before the elections had been held. The Right Wing were expected to win, and the Left would lose support inside—and outside—Greece if they attempted violence. Mr. Macmillan was less sure that the losing side would not try a *coup d'état* after the elections. Hence we should either withdraw all our troops by August 1945 or keep them for two months after the elections. The Chiefs of Staff supported Mr. Macmillan's proposal; the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden accepted it.

The troops therefore remained, but during the rest of the year little progress was made in the re-establishment of stable political or economic conditions in Greece. The right-wing supporters, goaded by threats from the left-wing press of a 'third round' in the political conflict, did not honour the promises given in the Varkiza agreement. The attempts by the Government to stabilise the currency were unsuccessful; the drachma fell from 4,400 to the pound sterling (gold) at the beginning of February to 15,000 at the beginning of August.²

¹ Mr. Eden stayed until February 16.

² At the end of the year the figure was 182,000.

(a) R3559, 3669/4/19; WP(45)138. (b) WM(45)29. (c) R6972/4/19.

In this situation the British authorities—who tended to be criticised by both sides—continued to provide a background of security behind which preparations could be made for elections and a plebiscite on the régime. There is little doubt that without this steadying force, and without the clear indication to the Soviet Government that the maintenance of Greek independence was a vital interest to Great Britain, Greece would have been brought into the area of Russian control. The political future of Greece at the time of the Potsdam Conference was still uncertain, but, whatever the mistakes of its politicians and the shortcomings of its citizens, the country which had first used the term ‘democracy’ was likely to retain democratic institutions as the western, and not the Russian world understood them.¹

¹ For the discussion of Greek affairs at the Potsdam Conference, see Volume V, Chapter LXIX, section (v).

CHAPTER XLIV

British relations with Italy, June 1944–July 1945

(i)

Abandonment of the proposal for a preliminary peace treaty with Italy: the Prime Minister's visit to Italy: proposals for concessions to Italy: the Prime Minister's discussions at Quebec with President Roosevelt: the Anglo-American declaration of September 26 on concessions to Italy (June 18–September 26, 1944).

- (a) **I**n a letter of June 18, 1944, to Sir O. Sargent on the unexpected refusal of the politicians in Rome to maintain Marshal Badoglio in office,¹ Mr. Makins wrote that the Italians had outmanoeuvred the Allies, though firmer Allied action would have kept the Badoglio Government in office. Mr. Makins thought that the new Government would not last for more than a few months, and that Count Sforza—who was disappointed at not becoming Foreign Minister—would try to upset it in the hope of becoming Prime Minister. Count Sforza, whom Mr. Makins described as a ‘clever rascal’, would time his plans to coincide with the American Presidential election, and would play on his following in the United States in order to neutralise American diplomatic action.

- Mr. Makins's forecast turned out to be accurate. Meanwhile he again recommended the negotiation of a partial peace treaty with Italy. The Foreign Office did not think that it was possible at the time to reopen this proposal, but Sir O. Sargent raised the question (b) on July 13 in relation to proposals for equipping three more Italian combat divisions. He pointed out that if we made a greater use of the Italian army, we should find it difficult later on to enforce upon Italy the drastic terms with regard to colonies and frontiers which we had in mind for the peace settlement. We should therefore be in a stronger position if we had already safeguarded our future demands in a preliminary peace treaty.

Mr. Eden sent a minute to the Prime Minister on August 8 suggesting that we should reconsider the question of a preliminary peace treaty. He said that, for reasons arising out of Italy's rôle as co-belligerent, and also for administrative convenience, we were

¹ See Volume II, Chapter XXXIII, section (iv).

(a) R10071/15/22. (b) R13226/27/22.

gradually relaxing our attitude towards Italy, and many of the terms of the armistice were already inoperative. The result was that the Italian Government was becoming more independent of us while we were becoming more dependent on it. Meanwhile the Americans were pressing us to agree to piecemeal relaxation of the armistice terms in matters such as the status of Italian prisoners of war and the financing of the occupation. We were now being asked by the Supreme Allied Commander in the Mediterranean to raise and equip three more Italian divisions.

The more we relied on the Italian contribution towards the campaign, the more difficult would we find it—especially if there were a long interval before the peace settlement—to maintain the stern but necessary conditions on such matters as colonies and frontiers which we were intending to impose on Italy. We should also have strong pressure from the Americans, and possibly from the Russians, to offer more piecemeal concessions which we ought to keep back in order to render easier the acceptance of the demands we should ultimately have to make. It could be argued that a knowledge of these severe terms might lessen the amount of Italian assistance during the war, but this risk was outweighed by the danger that we might permanently prejudice our claims against Italy if we did not conclude a preliminary peace before Italy could allege stronger reasons for lenient treatment in view of her services to the Allies since her surrender.

The United States Government did not reply formally until (a) August 5 to the proposals sent to them by the Foreign Office on May 20.¹ Their reply was then based on a certain misunderstanding of the British plan for negotiating a preliminary peace, but the Prime Minister's dislike of the plan put a stop for the time to further discussions. He told Mr. Macmillan on August 13 that he saw no (b) advantages to be gained or disadvantages to be avoided by an

¹ On July 22 Signor Bonomi addressed a letter to Mr. Hull asking for large economic and political concessions. He complained that the armistice was out of date, and that it prevented Italy from contributing to the war effort; hence there was a 'vicious circle', since the modification of the armistice had clearly been made to depend on the extent of the Italian contribution to the war. Among other requests, he asked that Italy should be allowed to take part in international organisations and conferences, and receive Lend-Lease and economic rehabilitation, and that the greater part of the functions of the Control Commission should be handed over to the High Commissioners or the Italian authorities. (c)

The State Department did not consult the Foreign Office about a reply, and a copy of it was only given privately by Mr. Kirk to Sir N. Charles. In the reply Mr. Hull said, *inter alia*, (i) that the sole purpose of the armistice terms was to further the war against Germany, (ii) that, as regards attending international conferences, etc., the Italians would have to overcome by hard work and patient understanding the effect of the crimes of the Fascist régime against other members of the United Nations, (iii) that the Allies had been studying the economic position of Italy since the beginning of the liberation of Italian territory, (iv) that the United States Government were considering ways of increasing and financing Italian imports for civilian consumption, but that Lend-Lease was not practicable, largely because it was almost entirely limited to military supplies.

(a) R12223/691/22. (b) R13070/27/22. (c) R13134, 14133/48/22.

'untimely peace' with Italy when the armistice terms were sufficient for our needs. In any case the Italian Government had no representative authority. They held office only as a result of their own intrigues, and the industrial north—which they did not represent—might easily repudiate a treaty signed by them. If we told the Italian Government now that Italy would lose her colonies and have to submit to losses in the north-eastern Adriatic, they might try to gain popularity by resisting us, while if they agreed their word would have no value.¹

- (a) On August 14 Mr. Eden wrote a letter in answer to questions which Sir N. Charles had raised, and indirectly, also, as a reply to another letter from Count Sforza. Mr. Eden instructed Sir N. Charles that he wanted Count Sforza to know that he would not engage in direct correspondence with him. Mr. Eden did not trust Count Sforza, and suspected everything which he said about Italian politics. In general he thought that the Italians should be told that they were deluding themselves if they thought (as Sir N. Charles seemed to suggest) that Italy could figure in the same category as France after the war. France, for all her weaknesses, had entered the war against Germany on our side, and our policy was to help her to recover her position as an Ally and to take part in the peace settlement as one of the victorious Powers. Italy had stabbed us and France in the back at one of the blackest moments in our history, and although we wished to see her restoration as a Mediterranean Power following a line in harmony with British policy and interests, we should certainly support France if we had to choose between France and Italy. There was, however, no reason for a choice of this kind. We wanted a friendly Italy, and for this reason we had to consider what we could do to secure Italian goodwill. With this object in mind we were thinking of negotiating a provisional peace treaty, and were also studying how we could help to revive Italian economic life. We must not, however, be frightened by the Italian threat that, if we did not go fast enough in transforming Italy from a defeated enemy into an ally entitled to all the material benefits which we could confer, the Italians would turn Communist and pro-Russian.

¹ In view of the Prime Minister's opposition the Foreign Office took no further steps towards initiating a discussion on the question of a preliminary peace with Italy. On September 29 Lord Halifax reported that the State Department had enquired whether any progress had been made in the matter. Lord Halifax was instructed on October 5 to reply that our proposal had been made in order to strengthen the Badoglio Government. This Government had fallen before we had received the views of the United States on the proposal. The whole question then had been reconsidered, but the recent concessions to Italy had provided the Italian Government with all the support which they were entitled to expect from the Allies to enable them to consolidate their internal position. We did not therefore think it necessary to offer more concessions such as the formal abolition of the armistice régime and the conclusion of a preliminary peace.

(a) R12663/53/22. (b) R15548/691/22.

We should have to counter Russian influences and intrigues in Italy when they conflicted with our interests, but even if the Italians accepted a Communist dictatorship, we might hope that in their foreign relations they would be attracted to Great Britain and the United States for economic as well as sentimental reasons.

The Prime Minister paid a two-day visit to Rome from August 21 (a) to 23.¹ During this visit he met members of the Italian Government and the British civil and military authorities.² The visit did not allow a great deal of time for discussion, since the Prime Minister also met M. Papandreou, the Greek Prime Minister.³ A four hours' meeting took place, however, on August 22 at which the Prime Minister considered the political situation in Italy with Mr. Macmillan, Sir N. Charles, Mr. Hopkinson,⁴ Mr. Makins and Mr. Dixon.⁵

The political background against which these talks took place was (b) becoming dominated increasingly by the Communists. They claimed a leading part in the final stages of the fight against the invader on the ground that they were the only party which had never compromised with Fascism. They were well organised and, since the arrival of Signor Togliatti from Russia in March 1944, had shown great energy in political campaigning. They kept to constitutional methods, though they were 'all things to all men'. They had secured a working alliance with the Socialists for a programme based on the establishment of a democratic republic. The moderates were at last beginning to make a more united stand against them, instead of disputing among themselves. The move to the left, however, was likely to become more rapid if we could not strengthen Signor Bonomi's Government. Signor Bonomi was blamed for the slowness with which the country was being purged of Fascism, the scarcity of food and transport, and the amount of unemployment. Even his own supporters thought that he could do more to improve the status of Italy, but the Allies gave him little encouragement. The position of

¹ The military position at the time of these talks was that the Allies had reached Florence, and were preparing for the assault on the so-called Gothic Line between Pisa and Rimini, which began on August 26.

² The Prime Minister issued an address to the Italian people on August 29. This address was in friendly terms, and emphasised the value of the gift of freedom to Italy at the end of the war in Europe. The Prime Minister said that he had directed the British representatives in the various international bodies concerned with Italian administration to do their best to meet the inevitable difficulties caused by war conditions. He made it clear that Italy could not escape the penalties due to the crimes of the Fascist régime, but that we wanted to see the restoration of a free and progressive Italy.

³ See above, pp. 409-10.

⁴ Mr. Hopkinson was Deputy High Commissioner in Italy.

⁵ Mr. Dixon was Private Secretary to Mr. Eden. He accompanied the Prime Minister to Italy.

(a) R14303/691/22. (b) R13015/53/22; R14303/691/22.

Italian prisoners of war in the British Empire, for example, was felt as a humiliation by Italian soldiers fighting as co-belligerents in the front line.

- (a) The Prime Minister summed up his discussions in two telegrams of August 22 to Mr. Eden. He said that he regarded the situation in Italy as unsatisfactory and as requiring urgent attention. The conclusions reached at his meeting were (i) that, subject to the existing powers of the Supreme Allied Commander, Italy should be regarded as a friendly co-belligerent and no longer as an enemy State; (ii) that since hostilities had ceased between Great Britain and Italy, and we wanted in our own interests to prevent disturbances such as food riots, the Trading with the Enemy Acts should no longer be applied to Italy, and she should be allowed, as far as was practicable, to resume her foreign trade; (iii) that, if possible, Italy should share in the benefits of U.N.R.R.A. In general, the Allies should hand over to the Italian administration an increasing measure of control, and, as a mark of their change of attitude, the 'Allied Control Commission' should be called the 'Allied Commission', the British High Commissioner should be given the additional title of Ambassador, and the Italian Government should appoint an agent in London.¹
- (b) Sir N. Charles also telegraphed to the Foreign Office his own impressions of the discussion with the Prime Minister. He said that Mr. Dixon had explained to the Prime Minister the proposals of the Foreign Office for a preliminary peace treaty which would enable us to cease treating Italy as an enemy while not conferring on her the position of an Ally with full sovereignty.

The Prime Minister agreed that it was in our interest to maintain stability in Italy. He was also more inclined, after seeing Signor Bonomi, to extend support to his Government, but he thought it a mistake to deprive ourselves finally of the rights we had acquired under the Italian surrender and to abandon our machinery of control. Economic help would be easier to arrange and would be of the first importance in order to prevent disturbances arising out of shortages of food. The Prime Minister's view was that the limit of political concession should be a gesture such as the renaming of the Allied Control Commission to make clear that its function was to help and guide the Italians.

- (c) The Foreign Office were in general agreement that everything

¹ The Prime Minister also referred to changes in the relations between the Control Commission, the High Commissioner or Ambassador, and the British Resident Minister at Allied Headquarters. I have not dealt with this question, since it falls more suitably within the scope of *Allied Military Administration in Italy, 1943-5*.

(a) Tel. Chain 162 (Churchill Papers/247; R13128/48/22); Chain 175 (Churchill Papers/247; R13181/691/22). (b) R13173/691/22. (c) R13173, 14030/691/22.

possible should be done to prevent disturbances such as food riots in Italy and to raise the standard of living above a bare subsistence level. They considered that, subject to the requirements of the Commander-in-Chief, the Allied Control Commission was already handing over the administration to Italian control. On the other hand they saw difficulties in the proposal that U.N.R.R.A., which was precluded by its terms of reference from operating in enemy territory, should extend its activities to Italy. The Americans had recently suggested an extension of this kind, but Mr. Law, who was at the time in the United States, had pointed out that the Allies, and especially the victims of Italian aggression, would fail to understand why Italy should be the first country to receive the benefits of U.N.R.R.A. In fact U.N.R.R.A. had neither the funds nor the personnel to work effectively in Italy, and anything done there would be at the expense of Allied territories. There was no technical objection to the suspension, in favour of Italy, of legislation on trading with the enemy. A measure of this kind would probably have a good political effect, but, in the existing conditions of world trade, it was unlikely to bring much improvement to the Italian economic situation. It would be impossible formally to give up treating Italy as an enemy country, i.e. to put an end to the state of war between Great Britain and Italy, without a peace treaty. The Prime Minister, however, did not regard the conclusion of such a treaty as desirable. We could relax the terms of the armistice and give Italy considerable economic aid without a peace treaty, but we should find it very difficult to impose the punitive clauses of the treaty later on without lasting damage to Anglo-Italian relations if we had already granted all the concessions which might have made those clauses more acceptable to the Italian people.

A meeting was held in the Foreign Office on August 31 to consider the Prime Minister's proposals. On September 3 Mr. Eden sent a minute to the Prime Minister on the proposals. He agreed in general with the Prime Minister's policy of treating Italy as a friendly belligerent and no longer as any enemy State. He thought it better not to make a public announcement on the subject but to allow our concessions to speak for themselves. The first concession would be gradually to hand over more control of the administration to the Italians and to remove the term 'control' from the title of the Allied Control Commission. We would also give our High Commissioner the additional title of Ambassador and allow the Italian Government to appoint an agent in London. Our Allies would be free to take a similar course¹ and we should have to permit the Italians to have direct diplomatic relations with the neutrals.

¹ The Prime Minister noted here: 'I will propose it to the President.'

Mr. Eden thought that we should agree to the Italian request for help with regard to the 600,000 Italian soldiers interned in Germany whom the Germans refused to regard as prisoners of war. We could declare these men entitled to be treated as prisoners of war, and say that after the defeat of Germany we should take measures against those responsible for maltreating them. The Italians wished above all for the abolition of prisoner of war status in the case of the prisoners in our hands. We might therefore make some special arrangement about them.¹

We could hardly use U.N.R.R.A. for the purpose of giving Italy economic assistance. Mr. Eden here mentioned the objections raised by the Foreign Office to this plan. He added that Italy would probably not benefit greatly from the operations of U.N.R.R.A. since the Allies would have to secure that the relief given was the same for all countries; the Italians might thus get less relief from U.N.R.R.A. than they were receiving at present. Furthermore, since Italy was an enemy country, she would have to pay for any relief which she received.²

We could suspend as regards Italy the Trading with the Enemy Acts; this gesture would have some political value, and, although it would not lead to any great increase in Italian trade—since in existing circumstances the controls would have to continue in other forms—it would allow business contacts between Italy and other countries to be resumed.

We could also do something to ensure that our standards of relief for Italy went beyond the minimum hitherto laid down for the 'prevention of disease and unrest'. Mr. Eden had already decided that, if unrest in the widest sense of the term were to be prevented, we must allow to some extent for rehabilitation. The Committee appointed to deal with supplies for Liberated Areas had produced reports on these matters, but we were bound by the Chancellor's limitation of the total amount we could afford to spend on relief in Europe over and above our contribution to U.N.R.R.A. If the amount available proved to be inadequate, we might ask for an increase on grounds of policy.³ Mr. Eden then dealt in his minute with the proposal for reorganising our representation.⁴

(a) On September 18 the Prime Minister telegraphed from Quebec⁵ a summary of the modifications in British policy towards Italy which

¹ The Prime Minister put a question mark against this proposal.

² The Prime Minister noted here: 'I am afraid you ignore the realities.'

³ The Prime Minister noted here: 'They should come into U.N.R.R.A.'

⁴ The Prime Minister wrote on this minute that he and Mr. Eden might discuss it, but there seems to have been no time for any such discussion before the Prime Minister left for Quebec.

⁵ The telegram was drafted by Mr. Eden.

(a) Tel. Gunfire 250 (Churchill Papers/247; R14901/691/22).

he had discussed with Mr. Eden, Italy would henceforward be regarded as 'a friendly co-belligerent and no longer as an enemy state'. The first concession would be to hand over an increasing measure of control to the Italian administration (without limiting the powers of the Allied Supreme Commander). The British High Commissioner would be given the additional title of Ambassador, and the Italian Government allowed to appoint an agent in London. We should declare that the 600,000 or so Italian soldiers interned in Germany ought to be given prisoner of war status and that we would take 'appropriate measures' against those maltreating them. We thought that Italy ought to benefit to the extent of 50 million dollars from U.N.R.R.A. We intended to modify in Italian favour the Trading with the Enemy Acts, and to secure a considerable increase in the flow of supplies to Italy. The Prime Minister said that he was 'taking these matters up with President Roosevelt'. The discussion with the President seems only to have been a short one, since on September 19 the Prime Minister sent a message to Mr. Eden that he had agreed with the President on the text of a joint statement about Italy, and that he was telegraphing the text of this statement in case there were any points which he had overlooked. The President's intention was that the statement should be released in approximately forty-eight hours. The Prime Minister, who was now at sea on his return to England, asked Mr. Eden to inform the President through Lord Halifax whether he agreed with the statement or had any amendments to suggest. The Prime Minister said that there was no need to refer any proposed amendments to him.

The telegraphed text of the declaration was as follows:

'The Italian people freed of their Fascist and Nazi overlordship have in these last twelve months demonstrated their will to be free to fight on the side of the democracies and to take a place amongst the United Nations devoted to principles of peace and justice.

We believe we should give encouragement to those Italians who are standing for a political rebirth in Italy and are completing the destruction of the evil fascist system. We wish to afford Italians a greater opportunity to aid in the defeat of our common enemy. An increasing measure of control will be gradually handed over to Italian Administration subject of course to that Administration proving it can maintain law and order and regular administrative justice. To mark this change the Allied Control Commission will be renamed "The Allied Commission."

The British High Commissioner in Italy will assume additional title of Ambassador. The United States Representative in Rome already holds that rank. The Italian Government will be invited to appoint direct Representatives to Washington and London.

Our Governments are also willing to consider revision of present

long terms of Italian Armistice to bring them more in line with the present realistic situation.¹

First and immediate considerations in Italy are relief of hunger and sickness and fear. To this end we have to (*sic*) instruct our Representatives at (Rome?) (Conference?) of U.N.R.R.A. to declare for the sending of food-stuff and clothing and medical aids and other essential supplies to Italy.

At the same time the first step should be taken toward reconstruction of an Italian economy—an economy laid low under years of misrule of Mussolini and ravished by German policy of vengeful destruction.

These steps should be taken primarily as military aim to put full (resources?) of Italy and Italian people into the struggle to defeat Germany and Japan. For military reasons we should assist Italians in restoration of such powerful (*sic*) systems, their railway (motor?) transport, roads and other communications as entered into war situation and for a short time send engineers technicians and industry experts into Italy to help them in their own rehabilitation.

The application to Italy of Trading with the Enemy (Acts?) should be modified so as to enable business contacts between Italy and outside (constructive?) World to be resumed on basis of exchange of goods.

We all wish to speed the day when the last vestiges of Fascism in Italy will have (been?) wiped out when the last Germans will have left Italian soil and when there will be no need of any Allied troops to remain—the day when free elections can be held throughout Italy and when Italy can earn her proper place in the great family of free Nations.'

- This text did not reach Mr. Eden until late on September 20.
- (a) Meanwhile he had telegraphed to the Prime Minister that he hoped that the issue of the statement might be postponed for a time, since the lynching of an Italian in Rome² had been commented on severely in the British press, and there was much criticism of the inability of the Italian Government even to control its own trials. Mr. Eden understood the reasons why the Prime Minister wanted publicity for the concessions which were to be made, but thought that the moment was not opportune. Mr. Eden sent a telegram on similar lines to Lord Halifax asking him to explain his views to the President.
- (b) Lord Halifax replied on the night of September 20–1 that the President had suspended the statement in order to allow time for comments from the Foreign Office but that he would like to issue it within a week.

¹ This paragraph was omitted in the declaration of September 26.

² This act took place on September 18. The victim was a former governor of the Regina Coeli prison in Rome, who was a witness at the trial of one Caruso, a former Chief of Police, for executions and other offences committed in collaboration with the Germans. A mob broke into the Palace of Justice with the intention of lynching Caruso, but, on failing to find him, seized the ex-prison governor and killed him with great brutality.

(a) Tel. Cordite 380 (Churchill Papers/247; R15027/691/22). (b) R15028/691/22.

The Foreign Office comments were telegraphed to Lord Halifax on the evening of September 21. The most important point was that the paragraph dealing with the revision of the 'long armistice terms' should be cut out. We had not included a reference to these terms in our list of concessions because we did not want to reopen the whole position with regard to the Italian surrender and give the Italians an opportunity of calling into question terms such as the surrender of the colonies, the fleet, etc. Furthermore we could not raise the matter without consultation with the Soviet Government which was a party to the armistice terms. The Dominion Governments, which had approved the terms, would also expect to be consulted. In any case, the military authorities had hitherto been unwilling to publish the terms. If their revision were announced, Parliament would certainly ask to see them.

The Foreign Office also considered (i) that the words 'foodstuff and clothing' should be omitted from the paragraph dealing with the relief of hunger and sickness, since the help provided by U.N.R.R.A. seemed to be limited to medical aids and supplies for child welfare and displaced persons. The inclusion of any other form of aid would make it more difficult for our representatives at U.N.R.R.A. to get the agreement of other Allies. (ii) the reference to the exchange of goods, as worded in the paragraph dealing with trading with the enemy, would give the Italians a privileged position over all our Allies and ourselves and would undermine the Anglo-American arrangements for supply. We ought therefore to leave out the words 'on the basis of an exchange of goods'.

The Foreign Office asked when the President proposed to issue the statement, since we ought to tell the other United Nations who were represented on the Italian Advisory Council before we announced so important a change of policy. On September 22 the Foreign Office asked Lord Halifax to make sure that the United States Government understood what we meant by the reference to the appointment of British and American Ambassadors in Rome. Sir N. Charles already had the rank of Ambassador.¹ We now proposed that he should be accredited formally to the Italian Government. Were we right in assuming that the United States Ambassador would be similarly accredited? We had also to remember that other United Nations would wish to follow our example, and especially the Russians, whose representative with the Italian Government at present had only the rank of Counsellor and was called merely 'diplomatic representative'.

The United States Government made no reply to the question (a) about the appointment of ambassadors. Meanwhile the Foreign

¹ Sir N. Charles had been Ambassador in Brazil.

(a) R15635, 16513, 16751/691/22; R16754/15822/22.

Office modified their proposal, since they found it undesirable to suggest accrediting an ambassador to the court of a monarch with whom we were still juridically at war. Sir N. Charles was therefore instructed to tell the Italian Government that there could be no formal exchange of ambassadors in the usual sense of the term, but that he was authorised to enter into direct relations with the Italian Government; for this purpose he would have the rank of Ambassador (which, indeed, he already held) and an Italian representative on similar conditions would be welcomed in London.¹ After these instructions had been sent to Sir N. Charles, the United States Government notified the Foreign Office that they had accepted the original proposal and were accrediting Mr. Kirk as Ambassador. Neither Government changed its decision, but the formal difference in status had little practical effect.

- (a) During the night of September 21–2 Lord Halifax telegraphed that the President was now most anxious to release the statement at his press conference on the morning of Friday, September 22. If it were not possible to obtain British concurrence in time, he would postpone the release until 5 p.m. on Sunday evening, September 24, so that the statement could appear in Monday's newspapers. The President would be most reluctant to accept any longer delay.
- (b) The Prime Minister meantime had replied to Mr. Eden's telegram of September 20 that he had no doubt that a postponement of ten days or a fortnight would do no harm to 'our friend's affair² and certainly the filthy outrage in Rome requires a period of quarantine'. Mr. Eden now regarded it as most urgent to persuade the President to allow a further postponement. He telegraphed at 12.32 p.m. on September 22 to Lord Halifax that his (Lord Halifax's) telegram about the date of publication had crossed the telegram giving the amendments which he (Mr. Eden) and the Foreign Office regarded as essential. As regards the date of publication, Mr. Eden again referred to the need for consultation with the other United Nations represented on the Italian Advisory Council. He said also that he was much worried about reactions in Great Britain to the publication of a statement promising the Italian administration an increasing measure of control immediately after the disgraceful lack of control shown by the recent lynching incident.
- (d) The War Cabinet were informed on September 22 of this telegram to Lord Halifax, the Prime Minister's telegram agreeing to postponement, and the amendments which the Foreign Office had

¹ Count Carandini, the Italian representative in London, also had the personal rank of Ambassador.

² The Prime Minister apparently referred here to the President's reason for wanting an early publication, i.e. the presidential election campaign.

(a) R15246 691/22. (b) Gunfire 293 (Churchill Papers/247; R15246/691/22).
(c) R15246, 691/22. (d) WM(44)125.

proposed in the text of the statement. The War Cabinet were strongly in favour of postponement, and agreed that a telegram should be sent to the Prime Minister (and repeated to Washington) asking the Prime Minister to telegraph himself to the President urging postponement. After consulting Mr. Eden (who was not present at the Cabinet meeting) it was decided to vary this procedure and to send a telegram to Lord Halifax which would be repeated to the Prime Minister.

The telegram to Lord Halifax was sent at 9.15 p.m. on September (a) 22 under the signature of Mr. Attlee. Lord Halifax was instructed to ask for a postponement of ten days or a fortnight. These instructions crossed a message from Lord Halifax received during the early hours (b) of September 23 to the effect that Admiral Leahy, to whom the President had entrusted the business with regard to the statement, had promised to consult the President on the proposed amendments and on the question of postponement. Admiral Leahy thought that, as a reasonable compromise, publication might be delayed until the end, or near the end of the week beginning on September 24. In a second telegram Lord Halifax said that according to press reports the President had stated at his press conference on the morning of September 22 that he and the Prime Minister had given a great deal of time at Quebec to plans for the gradual transfer of our responsibility to the Italian Government and for the relief of the Italian people from starvation and cold in the winter months. The President had also said, with obvious reference to the events in Rome, that he did not like lynchings. In a third telegram sent later in the evening Lord Halifax reported that the President was 'very stiff about the date', and would not agree to postponement beyond Monday, September 25. He agreed to delete from the statement the paragraph about the revision of the armistice terms, and the words 'food supplies and clothing', and to substitute (in the 'trading' with the enemy clause) the words 'for the benefit of the Italian people' instead of 'on the basis of an exchange of goods'. He asked whether we would like an additional sentence somewhere in the declaration that 'the American and British people had been greatly shocked by the recent mob action in Rome, but felt that the best method of preventing a recurrence of such acts was to give the Italian people and their Government more responsibility'.

Late in the evening of September 22 the Foreign Office received a (c) message from the Prime Minister in answer to Mr. Eden's telegram of September 21 giving him the amendments telegraphed to Washington. The Prime Minister proposed to send a message to the

(a) R15246/691/22. (b) R15246/691/22. (c) Gunfire 304 (Churchill Papers/247; R15246/691/22).

President supporting the amendments and recommending that, in view of the effect in England of the lynching in Rome, it might be better to wait for a week or so before making the announcement.¹

- (a) At 2.15 p.m. on September 23 the Foreign Office telegraphed to Lord Halifax that the President apparently had not received the Prime Minister's message when he had decided that the statement should be issued on September 25. The War Cabinet still thought it essential that publication should be delayed for ten days or a fortnight.
- (b) This telegram crossed another telegram from Lord Halifax that Admiral Leahy had told him that the President had answered the Prime Minister's message with a telegram that he wished to publish the statement on Monday, September 25, and hoped that the Prime Minister would agree. From the text of this message it was clear the the President intended publication on the morning of September 25. He also used the words: 'it is extremely important to me' with regard to the date of publication.
- (c) Mr. Eden telegraphed to Lord Halifax at 8.50 p.m. on September 23 asking him to explain to the President that the Prime Minister would be unable to return any answer in time to allow publication in the American press on September 25. In view of the strong feelings of the War Cabinet, Mr. Eden thought that the answer must be given by the Prime Minister.²
- (d) Lord Halifax had drafted a telegram (before receiving this message) that Admiral Leahy had secured from the President—with considerable difficulty—a postponement until 'the morning papers here on Wednesday' (i.e. September 27). After receiving Mr. Eden's message Lord Halifax added a note that he hoped that the delay until Wednesday³ would allow Mr. Eden time for consultation with the Prime Minister.
- (e) The Prime Minister himself telegraphed to the President on September 25 that he had been unable to communicate with him earlier since his ship had been among U-boats and had had to keep a wireless silence. The Prime Minister now said that he would be making a statement in the House of Commons on September 28 and would like to refer to the joint declaration. He asked whether

¹ This message to the President was transmitted apparently during the night of September 22–3. A copy telegraphed to Lord Halifax bears the hour and date '12.45 a.m. September 22'. It is clear from examination of the file that this date is a mistake for 'September 23'.

² Mr. Eden had the approval of Mr. Attlee for this telegram.

³ Lord Halifax's telegram seems not to have taken account of the fact that, if the message were to appear in the morning newspapers of September 27, it would have to be released to them on the night of September 26.

(a) R15246/691/22. (b) R15246/691/22. (c) R15246/691/22. (d) R15319/691/22. (e) Gunfire 325, T1816/4, No. 786 (Churchill Papers/247; R15319/691/22). (f) T1804/4, No. 784 (Churchill Papers/247; R15246/691/22).

the President would agree to synchronise publication on that date. Later on September 25, however, the Prime Minister sent another message to the President agreeing to September 27. (a)

Mr. Eden gave the War Cabinet on September 25 an account of (b) these exchanges, and explained that all our amendments had been accepted. The War Cabinet agreed to accept publication in the morning papers of September 27.

The statement was in fact released at 5 p.m. on September 26 at (c) Washington, and at the equivalent time 10 p.m. in London. It was thus impossible to do more than notify the Dominions and the other powers represented on the Italian Advisory Council. The Prime (d) Minister—in a telegram of September 25—had opposed consultation on the ground that it would lead to delay, and that the concessions to Italy had been selected in such a way that the assent of other Powers was not necessary.¹

(ii)

The Italian political crisis of November 1944: renewal of British objections to Count Sforza's inclusion in an Italian Cabinet: further Anglo-American differences of view: joint Anglo-American declaration of December 14, 1944.

The Anglo-American declaration of September 26 strengthened (e) the position of Signor Bonomi at a time when he was in some danger of being forced to resign owing to the pressure of extremist opinion. Earlier in September he had considered dismissing two of his Ministers, but on British advice had avoided any change which might have led to a Cabinet crisis. On November 19, however, Sir N. Charles reported that Signor Bonomi was proposing to make some changes in his Cabinet in order to strengthen it on the technical side. He thought that it was undesirable to wait until the liberation of northern Italy, and that—without altering the proportional representation of the parties in his Government—he could transform it into a Cabinet of Reconstruction capable of holding office until the elections following the liberation of the country.

Sir N. Charles regarded these changes as justified; the Foreign (f) Office took a similar view. Unfortunately, however, the decision to

¹ One important matter was not mentioned in the declaration. There was no reference in it to the Italian desire that the British and United States Governments should take action to safeguard the 600,000 Italian soldiers interned in Germany. On October 24, (g) the Prime Minister suggested to the President that a statement should be issued by the two Governments declaring that they regarded the men in question as now entitled to prisoner of war treatment, and that they would take measures against any persons (h) responsible for maltreating them. The President agreed with this proposal.

(a) T1819/4, No. 787 (Churchill Papers/247; R15319/691/22). (b) WM(44)126.
 (c) R15292/691/22. (d) Gunfire 318 (Churchill Papers/247, R15292/691/22).
 (e) R15236, 18861/15/22. (f) R19338/15/22. (g) T1962/4, No. 806 (Churchill Papers/243; R17196/691/22). (h) T1968/4, No. 637 (Churchill Papers/243; R17196/691/22).

- make a change produced or at all events accelerated a crisis. The Communists in particular were already agitating for the acceleration of the purge in the army and civil service of all recent supporters of
- (a) Fascism, and there was some reason for thinking that the left-wing parties generally were not unwilling to leave the Government and thus dissociate themselves from the unpopularity which it was likely to incur during the inevitable privations of the winter months. One of the main reasons, however, for the development of a crisis was, as on previous occasions, the activities of Count Sforza.
 - (b) Count Sforza had been nominated by Signor Bonomi as Ambassador to Washington, but was refusing to allow the news of his appointment to be published. Meanwhile he was intriguing to secure for himself the Deputy Prime Ministership or at least the Ministry of Foreign
 - (c) Affairs. On November 22 Mr. Hopkinson (in the absence of Sir N. Charles) told the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, the Marchese Visconti Venosta (who was himself proposing to resign owing to the constant interference of Count Sforza in matters of foreign policy), that the British Government would regard Count Sforza as unacceptable for either post.

The Prime Minister, on hearing of these political manoeuvres, asked the Foreign Office on November 22 to telegraph at once to Sir N. Charles that he should do everything possible to oppose Count Sforza's appointment. The Prime Minister repeated his view that Count Sforza had broken his word; that he was a 'vain and intriguing person', and that he had recently 'had the impudence to deliver an oration about what was to be done in the colonies of all countries after the war'.

A telegram to this effect was sent to Sir N. Charles on November 23, and was followed on November 25 by further instructions. Sir N. Charles was told that our main concern with regard to the changes in the Italian Government was that Count Sforza should not enter the Cabinet. We had confidence in Signor Bonomi personally, and had no objection to the changes of personnel which he proposed to make. We hoped that he would remain in office, and strengthen the unity of the Italian political parties.

Sir N. Charles was advised to keep the United States Ambassador informed of his discussions with Signor Bonomi, but—in view of the liking of the United States Government for Count Sforza—not to put too much emphasis on the steps which he was taking to keep Count Sforza out of office. A copy of this telegram was sent to Lord Halifax, with instructions to communicate our views to the United States Government, while keeping in mind the warning given to Sir N. Charles about the reference to Count Sforza.

(a) R20304/15/22. (b) R19153/15/22. (c) R19030, 19153/15/22.

Meanwhile it was clear from Sir N. Charles's reports that the fact of the British opposition to the inclusion of Count Sforza in an important post in the Ministry had become known, and the left wing parties now found it a convenient excuse for basing their opposition on patriotic grounds. Count Sforza himself had encouraged them to take this line. (a)

On the night of November 27-8 Sir N. Charles reported an interview with Signor Bonomi. Signor Bonomi had explained that the six parties were still disputing the position, but that he hoped to be able to form a Government in a day or so either with all the parties or by the exclusion of one or two of them. Sir N. Charles said that he hoped that Signor Bonomi would be able to maintain the unity of the parties. (b)

Signor Bonomi then said that—at Count Sforza's instigation—the parties refused to believe that the British Government would regard him (Count Sforza) as unacceptable. Count Sforza had now been elected chairman of the Committee of National Liberation, and had sent a note to Signor Bonomi to the effect that the representatives of the six parties composing the Committee asked him (Signor Bonomi) to declare to the Allies that he would be unable to form a Government on a coalition basis unless he gave the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Count Sforza.

Signor Bonomi did not take this 'ultimatum', as Sir N. Charles called it, very seriously. He said that a delegation of three members of the parties wished to call on Sir N. Charles and to ask him to confirm the statement which he had made to Signor Bonomi about the British attitude. Sir N. Charles agreed to see them on the morning of November 28. He proposed to tell them that Signor Bonomi had reported correctly what he had said, and that he was surprised that they should ask him to confirm something which was generally known. The British Government wished to maintain good relations with the Italian Government; since, however, they had no confidence in Count Sforza, it would be useless to give him a post which brought him into direct relations with them.

Sir N. Charles said in his telegram that our objections to Count Sforza were now being mentioned in the press, and that, in addition to Count Sforza's own intrigues, one reason for accusing us of interference in Italian affairs was to divert public attention from the scandals of the purge.¹ Signor Bonomi had told Sir N. Charles that he intended to stand firm on the issue of checking the purge, which

¹ The moderates alleged that many of the persons attacked were of little importance—their record was no worse than that of most other officials during the Fascist régime—and that the left-wing politicians were using the charge of Fascism to eliminate their political opponents. (c)

(a) R19289, 19304/15/22. (b) R19413/15/22. (c) R19338/15/22.

was undermining the business of administration, and that he understood our reasons for standing firm with regard to Count Sforza. Sir N. Charles considered the ultimatum of the parties as an impertinence due partly to the knowledge of differences between British and American policy. Our refusal to accept Count Sforza, who was said to be highly esteemed in the United States, offered a good opportunity of isolating us. It would therefore be useful if the United States Ambassador could be instructed to support us in any statement to the Italian authorities.

- (a) Lord Halifax telegraphed on the night of November 29–30 that the State Department had been informed of our instructions of November 25 to Sir N. Charles, but that our objections to Count Sforza had not been emphasised. The press, however, had published messages from Rome describing our attitude as a ‘flat British veto on Count Sforza’. The State Department seemed to be without information and to have no clear views (Lord Halifax had heard privately that Mr. Kirk—the American Ambassador-designate in Rome—had recently reported that no immediate crisis in the Italian Government was likely, whereas other American sources had given more accurate forecasts). They were in some embarrassment about Count Sforza because they had accepted him as Ambassador-designate to Washington, and could hardly speak critically of his political manoeuvres, though they did not seem pleased that he was trying to get a position in the new Government while keeping his ambassadorship as a ‘second string’. Lord Halifax was afraid that, owing to the publicity given by the press to our objections to Count Sforza, we should have once more to bear the full blame for unfavourable political developments in Italy.
- (b) On the following night Lord Halifax reported that the State Department had instructed Mr. Kirk, in the event of a prolongation of the Italian Cabinet crisis, to tell Signor Bonomi that the internal dissensions in Italy were having the worst effect on American public opinion, and that he should try to form a Cabinet in which all six parties continued to be represented. Lord Halifax thought that the State Department were most reluctant to interfere in the crisis. They felt resentful that we had not informed them earlier of our objections to Count Sforza, and were afraid that our opposition would merely build him up as a martyr and as a rallying point for all Italians opposed to any form of Allied control of Italian internal affairs. The State Department were unwilling to go beyond raising military

(a) R19685/15/22. (b) R19800/15/22.

objections to ministers in the new Government. They would not put forward political objections, and were therefore unlikely to support our opposition to the appointment of Count Sforza as Prime Minister or Minister for Foreign Affairs. Meanwhile press and radio criticism of British interference in Italian domestic affairs continued.

On November 30 Sir N. Charles had reported a statement by (a) Mr. Kirk that the United States Government did not intend to interfere with the free choice of the Italians, while he (Sir N. Charles) had maintained the British view that the name of the proposed Italian Prime Minister should be approved by the Allied Governments before he entered on office. In a later telegram of November 30 (b) Sir N. Charles had said more about his uneasiness over the absence of a united front between ourselves and the Americans on Italian political questions. He had done his best to collaborate with Mr. Kirk, but the American policy of non-interference and Mr. Kirk's own personal preference for an aloof position had made collaboration impossible. The Foreign Office thought that Sir N. Charles was exaggerating the extent of the differences between British and American policy, and that, however unco-operative and negative he might find Mr. Kirk, he should always consult him and keep him informed before making any move affecting the Italians, even though in the end he might have to act against Mr. Kirk's advice. A telegram to this effect was sent to Sir N. Charles on December 8. Sir O. Sargent also intended to mention the matter of Mr. Kirk's collaboration to the United States Embassy in London.

Meanwhile on the evening of December 1 Sir N. Charles was (c) instructed that we required an Italian Government which commanded the support of the six principal Italian parties if we were to avoid the risk of civil disturbance which would embarrass our military requirements. Sir N. Charles should therefore make known our hope that the Socialists and Communists would come into the new Government. We should not, however, withhold our approval from any Government which might be formed. Sir N. Charles was told that, if he thought it desirable, he could get into direct touch with Signor Togliatti.

On this day (December 1) Mr. Eden made a statement in the House of Commons with regard to our policy in Italy.¹ He pointed out that Italy was a country with whom we had recently been at war—as a result of shameful Italian aggression—and which had surrendered unconditionally. We had now recognised her as a co-belligerent, but not as an Ally. We were therefore fully entitled to emphasise our views about the appointment to office of any particular

¹ *Parl. Deb., 5th Ser., H. of C.*, Vol. 406, cols. 305-6.

(a) R19682/15/22. (b) R19763/691/22. (c) R19682/15/22.

Italian statesman. We had not exercised a veto, but we could reasonably say that the appointment of Count Sforza—the case immediately in question—as Foreign Secretary would not facilitate the smooth working of Anglo-Italian relations. Count Sforza had not kept the promises which he made to us on returning to Italy. He had worked against the governments of Marshal Badoglio and of Signor Bonomi. In these circumstances we did not want him to be appointed Foreign Minister.

- (a) Lord Halifax was informed of Mr. Eden's speech and also asked to tell the State Department of our instructions to Sir N. Charles and to express a hope that Mr. Kirk would be asked to support them. He was also told—for his general guidance—that our attitude towards Count Sforza was based on our mistrust of him. This mistrust had nothing to do with his views about the monarchy, but was due to the fact that, in spite of his explicit pledges of co-operation, he had intrigued against every Italian government since his return to Italy. In view of his prospective appointment as Ambassador to Washington, and his standing with the Italian colony in the United States, we had thought that the United States Government would prefer not to associate themselves with our representations, and we had not asked them to do so. In general our attitude towards the governmental crisis in Italy was that the Italians should be encouraged to form a new government representing all six parties as soon as possible, and that we should try to damp down party politics as long as Italy remained a battlefield and we had to maintain public order in the interest of our military operations. Nevertheless Italy was a defeated country, and we had to preserve the right to express an opinion on persons such as Count Sforza with whom we should have the greatest difficulty in co-operating.

- Meanwhile the United States Government remained dissatisfied with the line which the British Government had taken over Count Sforza. On December 2 Mr. Gallman, of the United States Embassy in London, brought to the Foreign Office a paraphrase of the instructions sent to Mr. Kirk on November 30 and, at the same time, a letter expressing the regret of the State Department that the Foreign Office had found it necessary to interfere in an internal political crisis in Italy, and to do so without consultation with the United States Government.

Sir O. Sargent explained to Mr. Gallman that we were as anxious as the State Department that Italian political questions should be handled jointly by the two Governments, but that our representatives

(a) R19685/15/22. (b) R19907/15/22.

sometimes had to act without having had time to refer home for instructions. The best way of securing joint action was that the British and American representatives in Italy should collaborate as closely as possible in minimising differences of view between the two countries. Sir O. Sargent hoped that Mr. Kirk would be encouraged in this sense.

As for Count Sforza, there could be no question of our changing our view. We thought that the United States Government already knew these views, since we had made them clear when Marshal Badoglio's Government had been overthrown largely through Count Sforza's intrigues. We realised that the United States Government took a different view of Count Sforza owing to his special position and influence in the United States. Obviously Count Sforza would now start an agitation in his own favour in Italy and among his Italian supporters in America. We hoped, however, that the explanation which we had sent through Lord Halifax and Mr. Eden's statement in the House of Commons would enable the United States Government to understand our action. In virtue of an exchange of letters with Marshal Badoglio when he was Prime Minister, the Italian Government had recognised their obligation to obtain the approval of the Allied Governments to the appointment of any Cabinet Minister. The State Department were now suggesting that we should exercise this right solely on military grounds, but a limitation of this kind would mean abandoning a great part of the control over ministerial appointments to which we were entitled.

On the night of December 2-3 the Foreign Office telegraphed to (a) Lord Halifax to tell the State Department that we were grateful to the State Department for the instructions they were sending to Mr. Kirk. We hoped that Mr. Kirk would act on them. We regretted that the State Department felt that we had not told them earlier of our objections to Count Sforza, but we had assumed that they were aware of our views. We had informed them as soon as we had sent definite instructions on November 25 to Sir N. Charles to try to prevent Count Sforza's appointment as Minister for Foreign Affairs. We had not suggested a veto on this appointment, but our attitude towards Italian problems would certainly be affected if it took place.

The Prime Minister decided on December 2 to send a personal message to Lord Halifax. This message was telegraphed on the night of December 3-4. The Prime Minister said that, if necessary, he would (b) repeat his views in a personal message to the President. He asked Lord Halifax to say to the State Department, or others concerned, that there was no question of our exercising a veto against the

(a) R19800/15/22. (b) T2239/4 (Churchill Papers/243; R20007/15/22).

appointment of Count Sforza as Prime Minister or as Foreign Minister. Count Sforza, however, would certainly not command the slightest trust or confidence from us, and the Italian Government might be thought ill-advised in making difficulties for themselves in such a matter with one of the two Great Powers to whom Italy had surrendered unconditionally and whose armies were still operating on a large scale in the country. We had felt ourselves fully entitled to let the Italian Government know our views since we had been given the command in the Mediterranean, as the Americans had command in France, and we therefore had a certain special position and responsibility. It was surely desirable that the Italians concerned should know our views before they came to a decision about Count Sforza.

The Prime Minister then recapitulated in detail the reasons why we considered that Count Sforza had broken his word of honour to us, and that he was an intriguer and mischief-maker whom we strongly suspected of acting for his own advancement. Count Sforza, like all the Italian Ministers in office as 'stop-gaps' until the will of the Italian people could be ascertained, had no popular mandate or democratic authority of any sort or kind. If he were to take office, we should have to point out this fact, and in so doing we should not improve the chances of favourable relations with him.

Finally the Prime Minister instructed Lord Halifax to remind our friends in the United States—if necessary, he would himself remind the President—that he had taken great personal trouble to secure mitigations of the Italian position. He had put before the President at Quebec a number of proposals for easing the situation, especially before the Presidential election. He therefore felt entitled to expect considerate treatment from the State Department. Lord Halifax was instructed that, if he thought fit, he could read the Prime Minister's telegram to Mr. Stettinius¹ or leave a copy with him.

- (a) During the night of December 5–6 Lord Halifax reported an oral statement by Mr. Stettinius at his press conference on the morning of December 5 (and subsequently issued by the State Department). Mr. Stettinius had said that in the American view the composition of the Italian Government was purely an Italian affair except in the case of appointments where important military factors were concerned. The United States Government had not declared themselves opposed to Count Sforza. Since Italy was an area of combined responsibility the United States Government had reaffirmed both to the British and to

¹ Mr. Hull's resignation from the Secretaryship of State owing to ill-health was announced in Washington on November 27, 1944. The President appointed Mr. Stettinius, Under-Secretary of State, to succeed him. Mr. Hull had been taken ill on October 2.

(a) R20027/15/22.

the Italian Governments that they expected 'the Italians to work out their problems of Government on democratic lines without interference¹ from outside. This policy would apply to an even more pronounced degree with regard to the Governments of the United Nations in their liberated territories.'

The Foreign Office had already received, through Reuter's agency, (a) a copy of this statement issued by the State Department. Mr. Eden telegraphed during the night of December 5-6 to Lord Halifax that the comments on Italy seemed to show calculated unfriendliness towards Great Britain. This attitude was the more astonishing in view of the trouble which the Prime Minister had taken to support the President in his declaration about Italy after the Quebec Conference. This declaration was far from popular in England; we should certainly not have joined in it if the Prime Minister had not been anxious to show his loyalty to the President. The Prime Minister had seen the text of the statement and was deeply hurt by it. Lord Halifax would realise the use which our own critics would make of the statement. If the United States Government felt unable to support us, they might at least have kept silent or have been vaguely non-committal—they seldom had difficulty in taking the latter line.

The last sentence in the statement was especially serious since it implied a severe censure of our handling of Greek affairs.² We were in favour of the free expression of opinion on democratic lines, but we assumed that the State Department must know enough about the Greek position to realise that E.A.M. was attempting to seize power by force. If E.A.M. were confident of the support of the Greek people they would not be so much determined to keep their tommy-guns to show that they were right. The situation in Greece was clear. Either we must support the constitutional Government which until a few days before had contained representatives of all the parties or we must yield to mob law. We were not prepared to do the latter. We found the American attitude the more wounding because the Soviet Government had abstained hitherto from any similar conduct or comment. They might well be encouraged now to begin. Lord Halifax was therefore instructed to see Mr. Stettinius on December 6 and to speak to him as 'roughly' as he liked. The Prime Minister also (b) telegraphed to the President on December 6 that he was 'much astonished at the acerbity' of Mr. Stettinius's statement. He said he would have to make a statement in Parliament, and asked for permission to quote Count Sforza's letter to Mr. Berle of September 23, 1943.

¹ In the statement issued by the State Department the word used here was 'influence'.

² See above, p. 418, note 1.

(a) R20193/53/22. (b) T2263/4, No. 845, Churchill Papers/243.

- (a) The President replied the same day that the letter to Mr. Berle merely transmitted Count Sforza's message to Marshal Badoglio and did not involve the United States Government. The President saw no reason why the Prime Minister should not use the message in any way which he thought fit. The President thought Marshal Badoglio had published it in the press at the time he had received it.

The President went on to say that he deplored any offence which the press release on Italy had given to the Prime Minister personally or any implication that he (the President) failed to understand the Prime Minister's responsibility to his country. The Prime Minister, however, should recognise the untenable position in which the United States Government had been put by Mr. Eden's prior statement in the House of Commons regarding British representations to the Italian Government on the position of Count Sforza. While military operations continued, Italy was an area of combined Anglo-American operations and silence on the part of the United States Government would have implied their agreement with the British action. The British move was taken without consultation with the United States authorities and was contrary to the policy accepted at the Moscow Conference of recognising democratic solutions in government worked out by the Italian people themselves. In these circumstances the United States Government had no other choice except to make their position clear. The President then reminded the Prime Minister of his views at the time of the formation of Signor Bonomi's Government in June 1944.

- (b) Lord Halifax had left Washington for New York on the night of December 5-6. After consultation with him by telephone, and on his instructions, Mr. Wright¹ saw Mr. Stettinius in the afternoon of December 6. Mr. Wright said that Mr. Stettinius's statement had caused a most painful impression in London, and that press comment in the United States was interpreting it as a dissociation on the part of the United States from British policy in Italy and liberated countries, and was raising the question of Allied unity. It was inevitable that from time to time we and the Americans should take divergent views on current issues, but we had to learn to handle these divergencies in the best way. Action on the lines of the American statement was probably the worst way. We were entitled to our own views on Count Sforza and we should have been wrong to allow the Italians to form a Government without knowing these views. We had not gone as far as vetoing Count Sforza's appointment, and in expressing our views about him frankly we had done much less than the United States Government had done repeatedly in the case of personalities in the

¹ Mr. M. R. Wright was First Secretary at the British Embassy.

(a) T2274/4, No. 669 (Churchill Papers/243; R20472/691/22). (b) R20235/15/22.

Argentine. In the latter case, and in the cases of the American declaration about Italy after the Quebec Conference, and of the recent incident over Sweden,¹ and on other occasions the United States Government had taken unilateral decisions or action without consulting us. We had complained in private, but in public we had always gone with them as far as possible, and had loyally avoided any appearance of a rift in Allied unity. The United States Government had now behaved very differently to us.

Mr. Stettinius said that he had been brought into the Italian question only at the last moment. The difficulty had been that we had not consulted the United States Government before speaking to the Italians about Count Sforza, and had therefore put them in an embarrassing position with regard to their own public which had an exaggerated respect for Count Sforza as the 'grand old man' of anti-Fascism. They had therefore been compelled to say something to make their position clear.

Mr. Wright said that the United States Government were much more wrong not to have consulted us before making so damaging a statement. He pointed out that, apart from the issue of yielding to mob law in Greece, British opinion was particularly sensitive to American criticism on the Greek question. We had taken great risks and suffered heavily in trying to save Greece. The United States had always refused to accept political or military responsibility in the country. We had recently provided 180,000 tons of supplies, while the Americans, after much pressure, had given only 30,000 tons. The American statement had placed us in great difficulties and we hoped that Mr. Stettinius would say something to help the Prime Minister in the debate which was to take place in the House of Commons on December 8.

Mr. Stettinius said that his greatest aim and desire was to collaborate with Great Britain. He had not meant to cause us embarrassment, and regretted doing so. He would send Mr. Eden a message at once, and say something to the press. He then discussed with his own staff what he should say. They suggested that he might quote a statement by the Prime Minister on December 5 that the Greeks themselves had to choose between a monarchy and a republic, and a government of the Right or the Left.

Later on December 7 Lord Halifax telegraphed that the State Department had evidently drafted their statement without sufficient care and in order to meet internal criticism, and that their intention

¹ This incident concerned the negotiations with Sweden over cutting off trade between Sweden and Germany. The State Department had taken action in November 1944 contrary to the British proposals to them, and without previously consulting or even informing the Foreign Office. At the request of the Ministry of Economic Warfare Lord Halifax was instructed to protest against this unilateral action.

had not been unfriendly. Mr. Stettinius was issuing another statement in which he would quote the Prime Minister's words about Greece. He had at first thought of saying something about the Italian position but had decided not to do so. The State Department in fact agreed with the British view of Count Sforza, but were not prepared to object to Italian personalities unless they were Fascist or likely to endanger military operations. Mr. Stettinius also sent a message to Mr. Eden on December 7 in the most friendly terms.¹

- (a) On December 8 Mr. Churchill spoke in the House of Commons on the Italian situation. On the same night Lord Halifax transmitted the text of an *aide-mémoire* from the State Department in reply to the British *aide-mémoire* of December 4. This *aide-mémoire* stated that Mr. Kirk had been instructed to inform Signor Bonomi of American concern over the prolonged crisis in the Italian Government, and to emphasise the deplorable effect of this crisis on American public opinion at a time when Congress was considering the resumption of diplomatic relations with Italy.² In accordance with these instructions Mr. Kirk had expressly spoken of the hope of the United States Government that the representative character of the preceding administration would be preserved. He had said that, while the United States Government viewed the composition of the Italian Cabinet as a purely Italian problem, they were interested in the measure of co-operation and friendship extended by any new Government to the United Nations in the prosecution of the war against Germany, and would expect it to assume all previous Italian undertakings to the United Nations.

Mr. Kirk was instructed that all these factors would be considered before he was authorised to present letters accrediting him to the Italian Government. He was further instructed that when the Italian Cabinet should be submitted to the Supreme Allied Commander, Mediterranean theatre for approval, the United States Government considered that approval or disapproval should be given solely on important military grounds and that further reference to the Allied authorities or Governments by the Supreme Allied Commander was neither necessary nor desirable. The State Department also expressed its approval to Mr. Kirk of a statement of Allied policy which Allied Force Headquarters had recently made to the Chief Commissioner in response to his request for guidance in the present crisis.

¹ The repercussions of his original statement, however, continued. On December 7 Senator Connally, Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee of the Senate, issued a statement that he approved of the views of Mr. Stettinius on Italy 'as against the views of Mr. Eden. Italy ought to be allowed to control her own affairs so long as such control does not trespass upon or go contrary to the interests and objectives of the Allied Nations.'

² The Foreign Office had already been informed of these instructions. See above, p. 456.

(a) R20370/15/22. (b) R20297/15/22.

The statement was on the lines that Allied policy and objectives continued to be on the basis that democratic political solutions should be worked out by the Italian people themselves in furtherance of the war effort.

The State Department considered these instructions to Mr. Kirk to be in general agreement with those given to Sir N. Charles, and that Mr. Kirk had already received sufficient guidance to enable him to adopt a similar course in speaking to the Italian Government. With regard to the granting of Allied 'approval' to an Italian Government, the United States Government thought that the Supreme Allied Commander should object to individuals only on military grounds, but that the representative character of a new Government was of major importance and concern to the Allied Governments. The United States Government would give careful consideration to this aspect of the political solution before extending recognition to the new Government, and expected that there would be Anglo-American consultation on the matter at the appropriate time.

The Foreign Office considered these instructions to Mr. Kirk to be as satisfactory as could have been expected. They did not cover the Sforza case, and on this subject differences of opinion might arise again. Meanwhile Sir N. Charles had reported on December 9 that (a) Signor Bonomi had formed a new Government with representatives of four of the parties, including the Communists. Count Sforza was not in the Cabinet, and the post of Foreign Minister was given to Signor de Gasperi. On December 10 Signor Bonomi delivered to the (b) Allied Commission signed covenants accepting the obligations of former Governments and stating that each member of the new Government knew these obligations.

On December 10 Lord Halifax was instructed to thank the State (c) Department for their instructions to Mr. Kirk, and to say that, although we must 'agree to differ' on the question of individual appointments, we were in full accord on the main issues involved. We had heard that Signor Bonomi had formed a new Government, which did not include Count Sforza, and we assumed that the United States Government would agree with us in welcoming it, and that the State Department would doubtless tell Lord Halifax of the method by which they wished to extend recognition to it. In fact, the State Department told Lord Halifax on December 11 that they considered (d) that there was no objection to the new Government, and hoped that the British Government would take a similar view.

Lord Halifax reported on the night of December 12-13 that he had (e)

(a) R20369/15/22. (b) R20408/15/22. (c) R20370/15/22. (d) R20580/15/22. (e) R20716, 20937/15/22.

suggested to the State Department that the Anglo-American recognition of the new Italian Government might provide an opportunity for a declaration showing the general agreement of the two Governments on their policy with regard to Italy. The Foreign Office and the State Department agreed with this suggestion. The Foreign Office therefore issued a statement on December 14 in the following terms:

‘During the recent Italian political crisis leading up to the formation of a new Government under Signor Bonomi, the British and United States Ambassadors in Rome have kept in close consultation. The reports of the two Ambassadors having been considered satisfactory by their respective Governments, His Majesty’s Government and the United States Government, whose views are in agreement, have now informed their respective Ambassadors that they welcome the representative character of the new Government and are glad to see it assume office.’

The State Department issued a statement on the same day as follows:

‘The United States Ambassador in Rome, who has been maintaining close consultation with his British colleague, has kept the Department carefully informed of recent political developments in Italy. The new Government of Italy is supported by a majority of the political parties comprising the Committee of National Liberation and thus maintains a representative character.

This Government in accord with the British Government is happy to see the new Italian Government, under Signor Bonomi, taking office.’

Note to section (ii). British action to protect the safety of Marshal Badoglio, December 1944.

- (a) One indirect consequence of the Italian Cabinet crisis was a report that Count Sforza, as High Commissioner dealing with the punishment of Fascists, was intending to secure the arrest of Marshal Badoglio. Sir N. Charles telegraphed to the Foreign Office on the evening of December 4, 1944, that Marshal Badoglio himself believed this report, and had asked for his (Sir N. Charles’s) advice on what he should do. Sir N. Charles had consulted Mr. Kirk. Mr. Kirk thought that the British and American authorities could not go beyond warning Signor Bonomi that Marshal Badoglio’s arrest would have very serious consequences. Sir N. Charles gave this warning, and asked the Foreign Office for further instructions.

The Foreign Office considered that the arrest of Marshal Badoglio would be an act of revenge by Count Sforza for our opposition to his appointment as Prime Minister, and an attempt to involve us further in Italian affairs and cause further differences between British and

(a) R19994/15/22.

American policy. On the other hand, we were under no obligation to Marshal Badoglio, and had no more reason for interfering on his behalf than on behalf of Signor Gianini¹ who had recently been arrested. The Foreign Office therefore thought it advisable to warn Sir N. Charles not to become involved in the matter.

Sir N. Charles, however, telegraphed on December 6 that Marshal Badoglio had called at the Embassy to say that the Purge Commission under Count Sforza were intending to arrest him later in the day or on December 7. Sir N. Charles again protested to Signor Bonomi, and persuaded him, after a long discussion, to instruct the Purge Commission that the Marshal was not to be arrested. (a)

Since, however, Signor Bonomi failed at this time to form a Government, Sir N. Charles thought that the Purge Commission might not observe his instructions. He therefore advised the Marshal to leave his house for a few days. Marshal Badoglio asked whether he could stay in the British Embassy. Sir N. Charles thought that this would be embarrassing both for the British Government and the Marshal. He tried, without success, to arrange for him to stay in the Vatican. He then felt bound to invite the Marshal to dine with him, and then under pretext that he was unwell, to spend the night at the Embassy.

The Foreign Office remained uneasy that Sir N. Charles was committing himself more actively than Mr. Kirk to interference on the Marshal's behalf. The Prime Minister, however, on hearing what had happened, wrote a minute on December 7 to Mr. Eden that he ought to inform the United States Government. The Prime Minister asked whether he should send a message to the President. He thought that the execution of Marshal Badoglio by Count Sforza would involve a 'most odious breach of faith' on the part of Great Britain and the United States.

Mr. Eden therefore instructed Lord Halifax on the night of December 7-8 to ask whether the State Department shared the view of the British Government that the Italian Government should be told that for military reasons Marshal Badoglio must not be arrested. We considered that there would be grave military disadvantages in the Marshal's arrest and trial (leading probably to a death sentence). Marshal Badoglio had rendered valuable services to the Allied cause in signing the armistice and bringing over the Italian fleet, and later when he was Prime Minister. He still had great influence in the Italian armed forces, and these forces would regard Allied failure to protect him as an odious breach of faith.

During the night of December 7-8 Sir N. Charles reported that Signor Bonomi had sent him a letter from the Assistant Commissioner in charge of the purge that no steps were being taken to arrest Marshal Badoglio. Marshal Badoglio did not believe this assurance, and would not go to his home. Sir N. Charles thought that the best course (b)

¹ A former official of the Italian Ministry of Commerce. The Foreign Office had refused to allow the Master of the Rolls to intervene on Signor Gianini's behalf.

(a) R20135/15/22. (b) R20233/15/22.

would be for him to leave Italy. The Prime Minister sent a personal reply to Sir N. Charles that he (Sir N. Charles) would be responsible for the Marshal's safety in the British Embassy or elsewhere. Marshal Badoglio had signed a treaty with General Eisenhower, and also documents with Admiral Cunningham which involved the honour of the British Government. A man who had signed such documents could be brought to trial by the conquered Italians only with the approval and supervision of the Governments of the United States and the United Kingdom.

- (a) Within a few days, however, after discussion whether Marshal Badoglio should be brought to Malta or to the United Kingdom, the Marshal received a letter from Count Sforza stating that the Purge Commission had not intended, and did not intend to take proceedings against him. Count Sforza also agreed to see Marshal Badoglio and to assure him of the sincerity of this statement. Marshal Badoglio was in fact 'assured', and thenceforward there was no question of his leaving Italy.

(iii)

Anglo-American exchanges with regard to a common policy towards Italy: the question of a preliminary peace treaty with Italy: President Roosevelt's letter to the Prime Minister at the Yalta Conference: the Prime Minister's reply of April 8 (January–April, 1945).

The differences between the British and American attitude towards Italian problems continued to show themselves during the course of the discussions in Washington on the practical measures to be taken by the British and American Governments to implement the joint statement on policy towards Italy.

- (b) The United States Government were more inclined than the British Government to give way to Italian demands for very large concessions. The reason for this difference of attitude remained unchanged. The Americans had not been attacked by Italy, and American public opinion was inclined to relieve the Italian people of responsibility for the policy of the Fascist régime: the large *bloc* of voters of Italian origin in the United States encouraged this tendency by skilful propaganda, and their political support was not a matter which the President and the Administration could ignore. The President was indeed more forthcoming to the Italians than to the French. Moreover the deep-rooted suspicion of British colonialism and of the Prime Minister's conservative ideas continued to influence the State Department. In any case the Americans were anxious to 'liquidate' as rapidly as possible the whole situation arising from the war in Europe.

(a) R20993, 21047, 21183/15/22. (b) ZM454, 717/1/22 (1945).

On December 21, 1944, Lord Halifax reported that the State (a) Department was reviving the idea that the Allies should conclude a preliminary treaty of peace with Italy. The American view was that the Instrument of Surrender should be replaced by negotiated agreements with the Italian Government. These agreements would reserve for later decision questions such as frontiers which would be dealt with at the final peace settlement. The agreements would also provide for the military requirements of the Allies in regard to operations conducted in or based on Italy.

The Foreign Office held that there was nothing to be gained from an early arrangement with Italy which merely ended the state of war, and did not cover the terms which would have to be imposed at the final settlement. We had previously suggested the plan for a preliminary treaty but had done so at a time when we wanted to strengthen the position of the Badoglio Government and encourage it by adopting something more than a negative attitude towards its repeated requests for an improvement in the international status of Italy. Even so, we had in mind the inclusion of the stern but necessary conditions regarding colonies and frontiers which the Allies would doubtless confirm at the peace settlement. Furthermore, we had intended to tell the Badoglio Government only that we were prepared to conclude such a treaty when the military situation allowed us to do so, and when we were satisfied that the Italian Government had sufficient authority to speak on behalf of the whole Italian people, and not merely the part of it under their administration.

We had not taken any action in the matter, and saw no reason for reviving the proposal. The Foreign Office suggested that we should explain to the United States Government that the plan might gratify but would not strengthen the Italian Government (which could not yet claim to represent the whole of Italy); it would bring no substantial advantage to the United Nations. We and the United States were considering measures for implementing the joint statement of September 26, 1944. These measures should be of the greatest assistance to the Italian Government. We were not willing to agree to further concessions, and considered that the fact that the British Commonwealth had borne by far the greater share of the burden of the Italian war entitled us to ask that our views should be respected. As soon as the war with Germany was over, and as soon as the whole of Italy was freed, and our military operations were brought to an end, we should be willing to make peace with Italy before a settlement with Germany, and thereby to show that we regarded the association of Germany and Italy as finally terminated.

The Prime Minister fully accepted this view. In a minute to Mr. Eden on the draft telegram he wrote that 'the United States have

(a) R21516/691/22.

lesser rights in this matter than we have, who were attacked by Italy and had to fight them for two years before the United States intervened at all'.¹ He added: 'There is the question of the Italian fleet which the President promised should be divided in thirds without consulting us, in consequence of which we had to give thirteen British ships out of the fourteen in question to the Russians.'²

- (a) Lord Halifax was asked on January 17, 1945, to put the British view to the United States Government. For the time the American proposal for a preliminary treaty was dropped, though the State Department continued to regard it as desirable, and gave way only upon British insistence. Meanwhile Mr. Macmillan, as Acting President of the Allied Commission in Italy,³ had already made a statement to a press conference in Rome. In this statement (January 3) Mr. Macmillan explained that, after the announcement on November 10, 1944, of his appointment, he had begun discussions with the Allied authorities in Italy on the problems of a 'New Deal' for Italy. He had left for London on November 22, and by December 8 obtained the consent of the War Cabinet to proposals which he intended to put forward in Washington. On this day, however, Mr. Churchill had asked him to go to Athens; he had handed over the Italian questions and the European supply problem to the Minister of State in Washington. He had returned from Athens to Rome on December 29, and was now confident that an agreed policy of concessions would soon be announced. This statement caused satisfaction in Italy, though Mr. Macmillan had been careful to point out the great difficulties—especially on the matter of shipping—in meeting the needs of the liberating armies and the liberated nations.

- Before the announcement was made there was a sudden outburst of feeling in Italy against Great Britain owing to the misrepresentation and misunderstanding of a speech made by the Prime Minister on
- (b) British policy in the Mediterranean. Sir N. Charles telegraphed on February 5 that the Italians were in fact tending to feel aggrieved at what they took to be British opposition to the more lenient treatment which the Americans—and Russians—seemed prepared to give them. As earlier, the public statements of leading Americans encouraged
- (c) this view. Thus Mr. Stettinius and Mr. Hopkins paid a short visit to Allied Force Headquarters in Italy on January 30 and 31 as guests of General Clark. Mr. Hopkins had spent the two previous days in Rome. He did not see any British officials, and his views on the

¹ i.e. before United States forces actually took part in attacking Italian forces.

² See Volume II, Chapter XXXIV, section (vii).

³ i.e. the new title given, in accordance with the announcement of September 26, to the Control Commission. Mr. Macmillan was appointed Acting President; the Supreme Allied Commander retained the Presidency, but delegated his functions in permanence to the Acting President.

(a) ZM438, 760/1/22. (b) ZM1014/1/22. (c) ZM758, 762. 787/1/22.

Italian situation were known to the British authorities only through reports of his statements at a press conference which he gave solely to American correspondents. Mr. Hopkins saw Signor de Gasperi, and heard from him a long discourse about economic conditions in Italy and the matters on which the United States Government could provide more assistance. According to press reports Mr. Hopkins said to the correspondents that American public opinion would not allow the peoples of the 'liberated countries' (Mr. Hopkins used this term to include Italy) to suffer from cold, hunger, and other privations. The question of supplies to Italy depended on the amount of Allied shipping available, but the American civil authorities should insist on setting aside tonnage for civilian needs in Italy, France, and the Low Countries. Mr. Hopkins asserted that the military leaders were beginning to understand this necessity. American propaganda had promised ample supplies to the Italians, but these promises had not been fulfilled. The press correspondents represented Mr. Hopkins as admitting a change of mind on the wisdom, or possibility, of postponing the solution of important Italian political problems until after the war. He mentioned the crisis over Count Sforza as an example of a problem which had to be settled at once.

Mr. Macmillan's staff in Rome¹ thought that Mr. Hopkins might have formed an unfavourable impression of the British attitude towards Italy. Sir N. Charles did not interpret Mr. Hopkins's statements in this way, but there were continual suggestions in the American press that the British policy lagged behind that of the United States. The State Department thought—as before—that we should take a more forthcoming line; one senior American official had said that, whereas the United States Government wanted to help the Italians, the British Government wished 'to keep Italy down'.

The Foreign Office, in transmitting this information to Mr. Eden,² suggested that if the Americans at the conference criticised British policy towards Italy, we should try to convince them that there was no real difference of principle between the two Governments. Our common wish was for the restoration of peace, freedom, stability, and prosperity in Italy. Our differences with the United States Government were mainly on the matter of timing. The Americans, who had never felt themselves fully at war with Italy, wanted to make more rapid progress than we thought possible. We had to take account of public opinion both in Great Britain and other Allied countries; we also doubted the ability of the Italian Government to assume rapidly an increased burden of responsibility, but suggestions that we wanted to 'keep Italy down' could only harm Anglo-American relations, and do no good to Italy.

¹ Mr. Macmillan was at this time in Athens.

² Mr. Eden had left London for the Yalta Conference.

The Foreign Office thought that Mr. Eden might have a chance of pointing out to Mr. Hopkins that some of the difficulties about Allied economic policy towards Italy arose from the failure of the United States Government to appoint an American official to the senior post of head of the economic section (and Vice-President of the Economic Commission) in the Allied Commission, which had been vacant for several months. We had been pressing the Americans to make this appointment. The American attitude in the matter had been in surprising contrast with their readiness to criticise what we were doing in Italy.¹

- (a) The Italians themselves made a direct appeal to the three Powers at the Yalta Conference. On February 7 Signor Bonomi asked the Allied Commission to forward a message to President Roosevelt, the Prime Minister and Stalin. In this message Signor Bonomi requested that the three Heads of Government should re-examine the very severe conditions imposed on Italy in September 1943. He appealed for the grant of Allied status, and for additional economic and financial help.

In view of Signor Bonomi's request for Allied status, and of the continued American view that the new directive which the British Government proposed to give to the Supreme Allied Commander did not go far enough in the way of concession, the Foreign Office considered that the Italian question might be discussed at the Conference, and that in any case it would be desirable to raise it with Mr. Stettinius.

- (b) The Foreign Office therefore telegraphed to Mr. Eden on February 9 that we could take one of two alternative lines with the Americans: (a) we could continue to resist any proposal to make a preliminary peace or to accord Allied status to Italy; our reason would be that the concessions already made in our new directive were as far as we could go at present in view of British and Allied public opinion. (b) We could change our policy and agree to tell the Italian Government that we would consider the conclusion of a peace treaty with them. This treaty would have to include provisions not only for terminating the armistice régime and for meeting Allied military requirements, but also for the disposal of the Italian colonies and

¹ The Foreign Office felt at this time a certain exasperation over the Italian complaints. (c) Mr. Harvey noted on February 17: 'These Italians are true to form. They are always aggrieved. They used to be aggrieved with the Germans, and now they are aggrieved with us. If the war went on long enough they would be capable of ratting again . . . After all it is their fault that they went to war at all. They might have been like Spain making money from both sides. That said, however, and we should never forget it, we must clearly do what we can to bring them back to normal after their twenty years' fever. They must understand that Allies come first, co-belligerents second, and that supplies must inevitably be short for all.'

(a) ZM892/1/22. (b) ZM892/1/22. (c) ZM1014/1/22.

fleet and the settlement of Italian pre-war frontiers. A treaty which did not include these penal clauses but merely contained measures for improving the present status of Italy would not be understood in Great Britain or in Allied countries; it would also be much more difficult later to enforce the penal clauses. We wanted to help the Italian Government, and we realised the desirability of strengthening its authority in relation to north Italy, but we doubted whether the announcement of a peace treaty including the surrender of the colonies, etc. would really increase its prestige. We should have to consult our Allies, and this consultation would take some time.

There was a further consideration that an announcement at the conference that we were intending to give more assistance to Italy would be very badly received in France unless the conference went a long way to meet French claims with regard to Germany, etc., and in the Allied liberated countries unless we could say that adequate arrangements had been made to meet the requirements of these countries for their civil imports programmes.

The Foreign Office therefore hoped that the Conference would promise nothing more to the Italians, and that the new directive to the Supreme Allied Commander would soon be published. They repeated the suggestion that the two Governments should tell the Italian Government that, as soon as the war with Germany was over, and military operations in Italy had come to an end, they would be willing to make peace with Italy before a settlement with Germany.

The question of Italy was not officially brought before the Yalta Conference, but was discussed in general terms by the British and American delegates both at Malta and at Yalta. At Malta, in reply to (a) a suggestion by Mr. Matthews, of the State Department, that we were not prepared to go as far as the United States in helping to rebuild Italy, Sir A. Cadogan said that we were fully aware of the need to relieve and rehabilitate Italy, subject to the reservation that she should not receive better treatment than our liberated Allies.

At the end of the Yalta Conference President Roosevelt left with (b) the Prime Minister a letter referring to this conversation, and stating that, while there were certain differences of emphasis between the British and American views, there was no 'basic reason' for disagreement over Italy; it was in our joint basic interest to secure the return of Italy to the community of peace-loving democratic States. The President thought that some constructive steps should be taken to move away from 'onerous and obsolete' surrender terms which no longer suited the situation. Mr. Eden told the Prime Minister that he (c) thought the words of the letter were 'put in the President's mouth by

(a) ZM1055, 1127/1/22. (b) Churchill Papers/243; ZM1055/1/22. (c) ZM1127/1/22.

the State Department members of the American delegation',¹ and that it would be better not to take up the subject in detail with Mr. Roosevelt without previous consultation with the Foreign Office.

- (a) The Prime Minister therefore sent a short acknowledgement in which he promised to consider the letter on his return to London. On February 27 Mr. Churchill spoke in the House of Commons about the British attitude towards Italy. He said that the President and Mr. Stettinius had assured him that they had no complaints about any of the steps we had taken in Italy. The Prime Minister explained that he had led the way in bringing forward proposals for mitigating the attitude of the Allies towards Italy, and that, although we had 'suffered injury and ill-usage at Italy's hands in the days of Mussolini's power', we were adopting a generous view towards her, and had no designs of 'power politics'—'whatever they may be'—in the Mediterranean.

Three days earlier Mr. Macmillan had spoken of the policy laid down in the long-delayed directive to the Supreme Commander which was to implement the promise in the Anglo-American declaration of September 26, 1944. The State Department had accepted the directive, though they did not think that it went far enough in the way of concessions.² Mr. Macmillan said that the political section of

- (b) the Allied Commission would be abolished. The Italian Government would be permitted direct relationship with foreign diplomatic representatives and would not have to ask for the approval of the Commission for decrees and other legislation enacted in the territory under Italian jurisdiction; the functions of the Commission in this respect would be limited to consultation and advice. Mr. Macmillan, in announcing the changes, said that he regarded them as the penultimate, though not the final stage in an evolutionary process.³ Sir
- (c) N. Charles reported on March 2 that Mr. Macmillan's statement had had a good reception and that, together with Mr. Churchill's reference to Italy in the House of Commons, it had done much to improve Anglo-Italian relations.

The Americans, however, were still in favour of making a peace treaty with Italy. Mr. Eden wrote a minute to the Prime Minister on

¹ The letter was drafted by Mr. Matthews.

² The directive was formally from the Chiefs of Staff to Field-Marshal Alexander; hence their approval, as well as that of the State Department, was necessary. I have not dealt with the lengthy discussions on the Combined Civil Affairs Committee about this directive. The discussions had been prolonged owing to the differences of view between the British and United States Governments, but the directive covered a very large number of complicated matters, and indeed almost the whole field of political, economic and administrative relations between the Allies in Italy and the Italian Government.

³ The directive contained, at the insistence of the British Government, a statement that any new Italian Government would be requested to confirm their adherence to the terms of surrender undertaken by their predecessors.

(a) Churchill Papers/250; ZM1317/1/22. (b) ZM760, 1221/1/22. (c) ZM1361/1/22.

March 12 that the question of getting away from the armistice régime (a) in Italy was the real point of the President's letter. Mr. Eden thought that we should decide on the terms which we wished to impose on Italy, and also ask Lord Halifax to remind the State Department of the proposal we had made in January (i.e. that we should conclude a peace treaty with Italy after the end of the war with Germany, and before making peace with the latter). This plan would involve a somewhat lengthy procedure. We should have to clear our own draft with the Dominions before presenting it to the Americans; we should then have to make a joint Anglo-American approach to the other Allies. In view of the time which would elapse before we could say anything to the Italians, the Americans might refuse the plan. In such case we should have to agree to the American plan, but we should have to insist upon including in the treaty questions such as frontiers, colonies, and the fleet, at all events to the extent of securing an explicit renunciation from the Italians of all rights in these matters. Mr. Eden then suggested a draft telegram which the Prime Minister might send to the President as a reply in general terms to his letter.

The Prime Minister wrote to Mr. Eden on March 17 that he would (b) be willing to send a letter to the President. He said that he had 'to be very careful now not to overwhelm him with telegrams about business which I fear may bore him. A letter would be on a different footing, and could be delivered through our Ambassador.' Mr. Churchill said that the draft which Mr. Eden had given him did not mention the questions of frontiers, colonies and fleets. He also wanted to add that he was favourably disposed to Italian as opposed to Marshal Tito's claims in the northern Adriatic. He might thus discover the President's view. Mr. Churchill knew that the President thought that Trieste should be an 'international outlet'; he (Mr. Churchill) suggested that it might be an international port in Italian territory. 'I do not know what you think about this.' Finally Mr. Churchill asked for a longer draft which he could put 'in his own words'.

The Foreign Office agreed that the Prime Minister's communication could go as a letter. They pointed out that they also wanted to instruct Lord Halifax to explain to the State Department our views about an Italian peace treaty. The Foreign Office thought that the Prime Minister had not fully understood the principal purpose of the draft message to the President. Its principal object was to assure the President that we were prepared to make a serious effort to meet the American desire to modify the Italian armistice régime. We also wanted to suggest to the President the importance of keeping in close touch with us, and not merely telling us when the United States

(a) P.M./45/100 (Churchill Papers/250/3); ZM1572/1/22. (b) PMM/216/5 (Churchill Papers/250/3).

Government had decided on a policy. It would therefore be better not to mention detailed questions. In any case we ought not to raise the question of Trieste while we were still discussing with the Americans what to do with Venezia Giulia after its evacuation by the Germans.¹

- Mr. Eden sent a minute to the Prime Minister on March 26 to this effect. The Prime Minister accepted Mr. Eden's suggestion, and on
- (a) April 8 signed a letter to the President. He wrote of his 'entire agreement' that there was 'no basic reason for any quarrel between us'. We shared the American wish to see Italy 'restored to political and moral health', but in helping her we could not ignore our own public opinion; we were also bound to 'keep in step with what we are doing for those Allies who have been with us through everything'. The Prime Minister included a reference to the need for close Anglo-American contact in the whole Italian question, and said that the Foreign Office would be approaching the State Department on the next step to be taken.
- (b) On April 10 the Foreign Office sent a telegram of instruction to Lord Halifax asking him—after delivering the Prime Minister's letter—to remind the State Department of our statement to them that we would be willing to consider making peace with Italy as soon as possible after the defeat of Germany and before the settlement of peace terms with the latter. We had no reply from the State Department to this suggestion, but were preparing as a matter of urgency a draft of the terms we should wish to include in a treaty. We intended, after consultation with the Dominion Governments, to submit this draft to the United States Government. We would therefore be glad to know their views about the terms, and to work out with them the procedure for obtaining the views of other Allied Governments and making some communication to the Italian Government.

This procedure would mean some delay, and for this reason the United States Government might be unwilling to accept it as an alternative to the proposals which they had put forward for a temporary settlement. If we could not get American approval of our plan, we might be willing to agree to accept the American proposals as a basis for discussion—we could not agree to these proposals as at present framed—and on the understanding that the agreements with the Italian Government did not merely leave aside for future settlement important questions relating to frontiers, colonies, and the Italian fleet. We should require the Italian Government, in any agreement, to renounce all rights in these matters and to undertake in advance to

¹ See above, pp. 367–8.

(a) P.M./45/135, and copy of letter (Churchill Papers/250/3); ZM1820/1/22.
 (b) ZM2307/1/22.

accept the final dispositions made by the Allies. Our own public opinion and that of our European Allies would not understand a policy which brought to Italy the benefits of a formal conclusion of peace without its attendant penalties. The concessions which the United States Government had in view would bring only a temporary advantage, while making it harder to impose the final terms we had in view, and making it almost certain that the Italians would regard us, and not the United States or the Soviet Union, as responsible for the penalties imposed on them.

Lord Halifax replied to these instructions on April 14 that the attitude of the State Department was likely to depend on the date at which we could promise to give them our draft. He thought that they would probably agree if we could promise the draft within five or six weeks, but that, if the delay ran into months, and no firm promise could be given of any date, the State Department would probably insist on their own proposals. Lord Halifax thought that it was desirable to settle the matter as soon as possible, since Italian-American opinion was continually working in favour of lenient treatment for Italy, and the longer the delay the less support we should get for the terms which we thought it necessary to impose.

The Foreign Office replied to Lord Halifax on April 21 that we could not give a definite time-limit, especially if the Secretary of State were likely to be away for some time at San Francisco, but that we hoped to be able to tell the State Department definitely of our political terms, and to give a general idea of the other terms within six weeks.

(iv)

Foreign Office memorandum on a peace treaty with Italy: Anglo-American attitude towards the 'institutional' question in Italy: Foreign Office brief on Italy for the British Delegation to the Potsdam Conference (May-July, 1945).

During this exchange of views with Lord Halifax, the military situation in Italy was changing very rapidly. The final Allied offensive opened on April 9: before the end of the month the Germans had been forced to surrender and on April 29 hostilities in Italy came to an end. Hence there were obvious reasons for speeding up the preparations for a treaty and reaching agreement about it with the United States Government.

The Foreign Office drew up in the latter part of May a memorandum on a peace treaty with Italy. The memorandum, however, was not submitted in final form to the War Cabinet until July 5 and was considered by them a week later. In the meantime the British and

(a) ZM2106, 2213/1/22. (b) ZM2838/1/22.

United States Governments had been dealing with the political and military crisis arising out of Marshal Tito's territorial demands.¹

- Mr. Eden had telegraphed strongly to the Prime Minister from Washington on April 17 about these claims—which included demands for the whole of Istria and Trieste—and had proposed shutting down supplies to Marshal Tito. The Prime Minister had answered on
- (a) April 18 that he had never trusted Marshal Tito 'since he levanted from Vis'. The Prime Minister considered that we should 'stand on the broad position that no transferences of territory can be settled except at the Peace Conference or by an interim agreement between the parties concerned'. He agreed that 'all supplies to Tito should be shut down on the best pretext that can be found'. He also agreed with a comment of Mr. Eden that on a long view Marshal Tito's attitude might have the effect of 'arresting Communist tendencies in Italy'. The Prime Minister thought that the 'only way to split the Communist Party in Italy' was upon Marshal Tito's claims. 'It is in our interest to prevent the Russian submergence of Central and Western Europe as far as possible.' The Americans would support us, and we should have the majority of Italians behind us in resisting a Communist advance.

- The Foreign Office held this same view very strongly. At the height of the crisis in May they considered that, if we gave way over Trieste, the Italians, who were ready to accept the loss of a large part of Venezia Giulia, would feel that we had been defeated by the Russians. The Italian Communist Party would be strengthened because Italian opinion would assume that the Russians alone were able to get what they wanted.

- (d) The Foreign Office memorandum on an Italian peace treaty stated that there was an inevitable conflict of interests in our approach to Italian questions. We wanted the restoration of a democratic Italy, purged of Fascism, as a useful and prosperous European State; we regarded it as necessary that this State should be given a reasonable chance of livelihood and economic development in order to prevent it from turning Communist and falling under Russian influence. In view of the geographical position of Italy, we desired to maintain friendly relations with her, and to welcome her as a member of any Western European system which might emerge after the war. Our interest in a friendly Italy had been increased by the trend of Russian policy in Europe and the recent behaviour of Marshal Tito.

On the other hand, there could be no question of admitting any longer the pretences of Italy to be a Great Power. It was necessary to

¹ See Chapter XLII, sections (v) and (vi).

(a) T510/5 (Churchill Papers/513; ZM2358/1/22). (b) T516/5 (Churchill Papers/513; ZM 2358/1/22). (c) ZM2872/1/22. (d) WP(45)64; ZM3840/1/22.

prove both to Italy and to the world that aggression did not pay; Italy must therefore make restitution for her past behaviour and for taking part in the war on the side of Germany. The peace treaty ought therefore to provide for the surrender by Italy of territory—metropolitan and overseas—and for reparation, but these provisions should not be carried to the length of endangering the internal stability or economy of the country. We should also pay attention to Italian susceptibilities in the matter of form and encourage the Italians by facilitating their admission to United Nations organisations.

Italy must recognise the independence of Ethiopia and Albania, and renounce the special position she had obtained in those countries. The Dodecanese should be given to Greece (with the exception of Castelorizo which ought probably to go to Turkey). Yugoslavia should receive Zara and the islands off the Dalmatian coast.¹ The Chiefs of Staff thought that the islands of Pantellaria, Lampedusa and Linosa should not revert to full Italian sovereignty; the Foreign Office suggested that they might be administered by Italy under international supervision. France might put forward claims for minor frontier changes in the neighbourhood of Briançon and Ventimiglia. We might support such claims, but not any further claim with regard to the Val d'Aosta.

There were three more difficult territorial questions: (i) South Tyrol. Here the southern half of the territory—the province of Trento—was Italian-speaking, and should remain Italian. The Italian acquisition in 1919 of the northern half—the province of Bolzano—was more questionable. The Armistice and Post-War Committee in 1944 had recommended that we should not exclude the possibility of returning this northern area to Austria.² The arguments were very evenly balanced. The Brenner was the best strategic frontier, but the Salorno line on the northern boundary of the Trento province would still leave Italy with a good defensive line. Italian industrialisation in the Bolzano area had strengthened the links between the province and the rest of Italy, and the maintenance of the existing frontier would cause the least economic dislocation, but in any case the dislocation need not be serious. We did not know how far the agreement of 1939 between Hitler and Mussolini for the transfer of populations had been carried out, or the extent to which

¹ In the first draft of the memorandum it was stated that these territories should not be given at once to the recipients, but should be ceded to the Four Powers, for subsequent disposition by them, since otherwise Yugoslavia would have a precedent for claiming Venezia Giulia. In July the Foreign Office thought that the territorial questions could be settled more definitely in the treaty, but that no decision should be taken until after the Potsdam Conference.

² See Volume V, Chapter LXIV, section (vii).

it had been reversed as a result of German control since 1943, but probably the population of Bolzano was mainly German.¹ In the long run we had more to gain by avoiding further humiliation of Italy than by satisfying Austrian aspirations. It could not be said that the acquisition of Bolzano was indispensable to the 'free and independent Austria' to which we were committed, while it might be a source of danger if Austria fell under purely Russian influence. We might therefore leave the question open, and explain our views to the Americans.

(ii) Trieste and Venezia Giulia. The 1920 frontier was unfair to Yugoslavia; we could not, however, support the extreme Yugoslav claims which included not only the whole province but parts of Italy proper. A settlement which deprived Italy of Trieste and the predominantly Italian areas in Gorizia and at the mouth of the Isonzo would cause bitter feeling in Italy. The right solution seemed to be to provide in the treaty for the cession by Italy to the Four Powers of the whole area between the 1914 and 1920 frontiers and for these Powers to decide later what was to be the frontier line. Trieste, if it were not given an international status, would be included in the Italian area, subject to certain conditions regarding free zones, and trade facilities. A small area around Tarvis might be returned to Austria.

(iii) The Italian Colonies. These colonies had been the product of strategic calculation and of Italian pretensions to be a Great Power. We had a strategic interest in preventing the return of Italy to the Red Sea. The future security of the Mediterranean would probably require the establishment of United Nations bases in the former Italian territories in North Africa. The restoration of Italian rule in any of these territories would be unpopular with the inhabitants and with the Arab world generally. Their loss would not injure Italy economically since the colonies were economic liabilities. It would probably be decided to place the territories under international trusteeship. Italy might be given, as part of such arrangement, the rights of administration over Tripolitania.

The Foreign Office had also been considering the internal situation in Italy. The question was discussed generally with Mr. Macmillan after his return to England to take up his appointment as Secretary of State for Air. One important problem was raised by the Italians themselves. In July 1944, the Italian Government had approved a draft providing for the summoning of a Constituent Assembly to determine the future constitution of the State. The

¹ It was found in fact that while the mountain areas of the province had remained German, the population of the town of Bolzano (Botzen) was predominantly Italian. This fact could have been verified at the time when the memorandum was submitted to the Cabinet, since Allied officers had reached Bolzano in the first week of May.

(a) ZM2312/3/22; ZM2845/3/22; ZM3022, 3140/1/22.

Government were already pledged not to reopen this 'institutional question'¹ until after the liberation of the whole country.

In the latter part of April, and in May 1945, the parties forming the Committee of National Liberation had asked for the convocation of the Constituent Assembly as soon as possible. The Communists had given notice that if the date were unduly delayed they would demand the establishment of a regency on the Yugoslav model. The Socialists also objected to Crown Prince Umberto remaining as Head of the State. The Foreign Office thought it desirable to obtain the agreement of the State Department to joint action if the reopening of the institutional question were raised. Lord Halifax was therefore instructed on April 25 to tell the State Department that, in our view, it was desirable to continue postponement of the institutional question until after the elections. A new factor was, however, introduced when on May 3 Signor Bonomi suggested that the Allies themselves (a) might stipulate, preferably in the Peace Treaty, that the question should be decided by a plebiscite.

The Foreign Office told the State Department through the Embassy at Washington on May 15 that they also did not wish to see the introduction of a Regency before the elections, and that they thought that the Italian Government should be held to its promise. (b) Lord Halifax reported on May 16 the preliminary view of the State Department that, if the need for action arose while Signor Bonomi was Prime Minister, they would recommend the policy suggested by the Foreign Office, but that, if there were a change of Government, they would refer the new Administration to the Decree Law of June 1944.²

On May 29 Lord Halifax transmitted the text of an *aide-mémoire* (c) from the State Department in which they confirmed their view that the two Powers—with the concurrence of the Soviet Government—should 'explicitly and formally' accept the Decree Law, and thus place upon the Italian Government the responsibility for 'maintaining the present provisional structure' of this Government until the convocation of the Constituent Assembly. The State Department thought that, if a new Government were formed, the Prime Minister should pledge its acceptance of the obligations to the Allied Powers under the armistice terms and reaffirm the Decree Law.

The two Governments should also require a satisfactory restoration of electoral machinery in the Communes before the elections to a Constituent Assembly, and should advise the Italian Government to

¹ This term was used to cover the question whether the form of government should be monarchical or republican.

² See Volume II, p. 545.

(a) ZM2524/3/22. (b) ZM2747/3/22. (c) ZM3214/3/22.

adopt a plan for regional decentralisation. Meanwhile, on May 24, (a) Field-Marshal Alexander, as Supreme Allied Commander in Italy, had directed that any new Government would be required to subscribe to the existing undertaking not to raise the institutional question until after the liberation of the country and the holding of elections.

The attitude of the Foreign Office to Signor Bonomi's proposal (b) was summed up in a despatch—which showed, incidentally, the influence of Mr. Macmillan's views—submitted for the approval of the Prime Minister (in Mr. Eden's absence) and sent to Lord Halifax on June 13. The Foreign Office pointed out that hitherto the Allied attitude towards the institutional question had been merely to maintain the *status quo* until the Italian people were free to choose their form of government. This attitude, however, did not mean that the Allies were principally interested in the preservation of the Italian monarchy. The British view was that the monarchy might prove to have been compromised so much during the previous twenty-five years that it would be a source of weakness rather than of strength to Italy. In any case the question of the monarchy was of secondary importance. The real issue was whether Italy should become a parliamentary democracy or revert again to totalitarianism with the Communists in place of the Fascists. It was indifferent to us whether the parliamentary democracy was monarchical or republican. We regretted that the question had been discussed in these terms for so long, since they merely confused the issue and allowed the Left to denounce any form of Allied intervention as an attempt to save the monarchy.

The despatch then considered Signor Bonomi's suggestion about a plebiscite. The Foreign Office could not say whether Count Carandini¹ was right in forecasting that a plebiscite would result in a majority vote for the monarchy but it was certainly true that the procedure by elections to a Constituent Assembly followed by a vote in the latter, would favour the Communists who were the best organised and most unscrupulous of the parties. On the other hand there were obvious difficulties in the way of insisting on a plebiscite. Neither the United States nor the Soviet Government would be likely to agree to it. It would be interpreted as an attempt to intervene in favour of the monarchy, and might produce the result which it was intended to prevent. The real issue—parliamentary democracy as opposed to a totalitarian State—could not be expressed on the voting paper. We should also be committed to supervise the arrangements for the plebiscite.

¹ Since October 1944, Italian representative with ambassadorial rank in London.

(a) ZM2932/3/22. (b) ZM3140/1/22.

We might, however, insert in the most general terms a provision in the Peace Treaty that we expected Italy to ensure that a democratic form of government was set up in accordance with the wishes of the Italian people. A general statement of this kind would be in line with the resolution of the Moscow Conference of October 1943 with regard to Italy and with the Yalta declaration on Liberated Europe. The application of the provision would be left to the Constituent Assembly, but we should do what we could to encourage the moderate elements in the Assembly and the country, e.g. we could suggest that the Assembly should refer all or part of the new Constitution to a direct popular vote. Such a confirmatory plebiscite might deter the Communists in the Assembly from forcing the Socialists to accept a totalitarian régime as part of a political bargain.

We must not suppose, however, that any influence which we could exercise in the political sphere would seriously affect the course of events. If we wished to prevent Italy from turning Communist we must rely on more practical methods, i.e. we must give her as much assistance as the United States in the first instance, and, in a lesser degree, we could afford, having regard to our heavy commitments elsewhere. The despatch then went into some detail about the question of supplies, raw materials, and financial arrangements, and the danger of widespread unemployment if the factories in north Italy were unable to resume or continue production. It was also desirable that we should maintain our support (in food and equipment) of the Italian armed forces, not only for reasons of internal security but also because we might be unable to withdraw from our military commitments in Venezia Giulia until we had left Italy with armed forces capable of withstanding, if necessary, a *coup de main* by Marshal Tito.

Lord Halifax was instructed to discuss these questions with the State Department, and to try to disabuse them of the idea—which they still seemed to hold—that we were following some sinister policy of our own in Italy, and were anxious to ‘keep Italy down’ and to prevent the United States from helping her recovery. In fact we were most anxious to see Italy in a position to contribute to the maintenance of peace and order in the Mediterranean area. To this end we were willing to conclude a treaty of peace with Italy, and were working on the text. We wanted to see Italy endowed with a popular democratic Government of the Western type and uninfluenced in her internal affairs by the activities of any foreign Power.

Our objectives and those of the United States were very similar; the Italian policy of the two Governments was based solely on their desire to bring about the political and economic rehabilitation of Europe on the basis of free and independent States; a weak and discontented Italy would tend to fall under Russian influence to the

exclusion of the United States and Great Britain. American policy was also affected by the large number of Italo-Americans resident in the United States; this fact was apt to make the United States Government particularly critical of anything which seemed to be hampering or delaying our common objective. It was therefore of the utmost importance that differences on procedure or pace should not confuse the main issue on which there should be no possible disagreement between the two Governments.¹

- (a) After the Foreign Office had sent a general statement of their views to Lord Halifax the Bonomi Government resigned in Italy and was replaced by an administration under Signor Parri.² On June 26 this Government announced their programme and their intention of
- (b) summoning a Constituent Assembly as soon as possible. The Foreign Office considered that the formation of a new Government brought a change in the situation and that, in view of Signor Parri's declarations, the issue of a statement on the lines proposed by the State Department was not necessary or even desirable. If we issued any statement we should limit it to a short note of satisfaction over the undertaking to hold elections.

In instructing Lord Halifax on July 7 to put this view to the State Department the Foreign Office asked him to say that in the existing state of affairs in Italy we attached much more importance to acts than to words, and that definite measures of Anglo-American assistance were worth more than somewhat platitudinous statements. The new Italian Government promised to be a good one, and deserving of help. Lord Halifax was instructed to remind the State Department of the considerations set out in the Foreign Office despatch of June 13, and to try to get their agreement to the following points to which we attached much greater importance than to a public statement about elections: (i) It was an American as well as a British interest to encourage Italy to look to the West and to prevent her from turning Communist. (ii) To this end both Governments must maintain a continuing interest in Italy. They could not disinterest themselves when all or most of their troops had left Italy. On the contrary this might be the time when their attention would be most needed since after the Allied troops had gone Italy would be most liable to internal disturbances. (iii) The two Governments must

¹ In agreeing to this despatch the Prime Minister noted: 'I do not see what we can do without the Americans. Their desire to get out of Europe will lead to their taking the easiest course, whether towards Italy or towards Russia.'

² Signor Parri (b. 1890) had been a prominent anti-Fascist and a leader in the Resistance movement. The reconstruction of the government had been expected after the complete liberation of north Italy. The new Government represented a coalition of the six parties, but the majority of the Ministers came from the north.

(a) ZM3695/3/22. (b) ZM3560/3/22.

show their interest in practical forms such as helping Italy to secure essential supplies and to maintain armed forces adequate to secure internal order and protection against local aggressors. Since these questions interested the United States as well as Great Britain, both countries should be ready to share the commitment.

In a further telegram of instructions Lord Halifax was informed that, as a result of the latest discussions with Sir N. Charles and Brigadier Lush (a member of the Allied Commission) we regarded it as most desirable that the Italian elections should be held as soon as was practicable and that they should not be postponed until June 1946. A fair election was more likely if polling took place while a substantial Allied force was in the country, and before the hardships of the winter—unemployment, etc.—had sapped morale and strengthened Communist influence. It was doubtful, however, whether the elections could be accelerated. If it were found impossible to hold them earlier, we should probably ask the State Department to join us in pressing the Italian Government to fix them for a date not later than the end of November. Sir N. Charles and the Allied Commission and—according to our information—the United States Ambassador in Rome thought that there was more chance of getting a fair vote on the institutional issue by a plebiscite than by a vote in the Constituent Assembly. There were, however, obvious difficulties in the way of suggesting a plebiscite, but if the Italian Government themselves proposed it, we should welcome the plan.

Lord Halifax replied during the night of July 11–12 that he had (a) put all our arguments to the State Department. They had agreed with our main view that Italy should be encouraged to remain within the western orbit, and that we should have to give her material as well as moral support after the withdrawal of the larger part of the Allied forces from the country. They also accepted our view that the new Government seemed more likely to show initiative in the work of reconstruction and that no new statement would be required until after the Potsdam meeting. They agreed that a plebiscite would be desirable on the institutional issue, and would incline to suggest this method if they were asked for advice. They shared the British view that the issue was not between monarchical and republican forms of government, but between a democratic and a totalitarian régime. They felt that there was no real divergence of view between the British and United States Governments on matters of principle or on questions of timing and approach.

It is uncertain whether Lord Halifax's telegram reached the Foreign Office in time for Mr. Eden to refer to it in submitting a memorandum to the Cabinet on July 12. At all events Mr. Eden, in (b)

(a) ZM3781/1/22. (b) WM(45)14; ZM3777, 3840, 3884/1/22.

addition to explaining the territorial and political clauses of the proposed peace treaty with Italy, asked the Cabinet to agree to the general conclusions which had already been put in substance to the United States Government. Mr. Eden summed up these conclusions as follows:

We should aim at building up Italy into a useful member of the European comity of nations, and should lead her to look to the west rather than to the east. To this end she should be encouraged to provide herself with a government elected on western democratic principles. Since this policy was as much in American as in British interests, we should do everything possible to encourage the United States to maintain an interest in Italy; we should not object to their taking the lead, especially in economic matters, though we might ourselves have to undertake additional obligations with regard to personnel or supplies.

In order to implement our policy, certain steps were desirable: (i) the early conclusion of a peace treaty; (ii) the encouragement of early elections for the Constituent Assembly, though it might not be possible for the elections to be held before the spring; (iii) a decision on the number of Allied troops to be retained in Italy. The Foreign Office thought it desirable to keep Allied troops—American as well as British—there until after the elections; (iv) the Italian Government should be enabled to maintain armed forces to preserve internal security and provide defence against local aggression. We ought to assist with material, etc. and with the establishment, for a limited period, of a military mission—preferably Anglo-American—to train the Italian army; (v) we should also consider a police mission, since it was of great importance to get the Italian police reorganised; (vi) we should increase our propaganda in Italy in order to convince the Italians of the advantages of a western democratic way of life; (vii) we should provide economic assistance—the supply of coal was especially urgent—but should try to reduce the other activities of the Allied Commission.

The Cabinet agreed with all Mr. Eden's proposals except with regard to the repatriation of prisoners of war in the United Kingdom and in India. The Ministry of Agriculture wanted to keep 30,000 Italians, on a wage-earning basis and by agreement, and the Secretary of State for India said that the Government of India were employing a considerable number of Italians on ship repairs.

In putting the proposals with regard to Italy before the Cabinet Mr. Eden had mentioned that the question of Italy would be discussed (a) at the Potsdam Conference. The Foreign Office drew up a brief for the British representatives at the conference on the lines of Mr.

(a) ZM3830/1/22; F.O. Potsdam archives, briefs/54.

Eden's statement. They were in some difficulty about preparing a brief for tripartite discussions, since they could not explain in it that British policy was largely directed towards ensuring that the Italians did not fall under Russian influence. They therefore provided two briefs—one for tripartite discussion, and the other for Anglo-American conversations.

The brief for Anglo-American-Russian discussion repeated the desire of the British Government to assist in the rehabilitation of Italy. The Italian people should be encouraged to work out measures of recovery for themselves, but they would need much assistance from the Allied Governments in the near future if their return to stability were not to be unduly delayed. On the political side we attached great importance to early elections. The new Italian Government were doing their best to hold the elections at an early date, and might be helped by a statement from the three Governments welcoming their programme, reaffirming the Moscow declaration of October 31, 1943, and stating that the elections should take place as soon as possible. Since it was desirable that the elections should take place in a calm atmosphere, the three Governments might include a reference to the need for mutual co-operation among the Italian people.

The corollary to a statement of this kind was that the three Governments would not interfere to influence the voting. It was not true that we wanted to insist on the return of the monarchy. We regarded the decision on this point as entirely for the Italian people. It was also incorrect to say that we and the United States Government had insisted on a pledge from the Italian Government not to raise the institutional question before the elections because we wanted to further the cause of the monarchy. The Italian Government had put themselves under an obligation in the matter by their own Decree Law of June 1944.

A further method of assisting the new Government would be a statement that the three Governments favoured the early conclusion of a Peace Treaty. We should also give some assurance that Italian economic needs would be considered with sympathy. If serious unemployment, with the consequent risk of internal disorder (which might have an unfortunate reaction on the elections) were to be avoided, supplies, especially of coal, would have to be sent to Italy in the near future.

The brief for Anglo-American discussion repeated the statement of policy already put to the State Department that we wanted to encourage Italy to look to the west rather than to the east, and to provide herself with a Government elected on western democratic principles. We should do everything possible to encourage continuing

American interest in Italy and should not mind their taking the lead, especially in economic matters. We hoped that the elections could be held before the winter, since economic hardship might well sap Italian morale and make it easier for the Communists to influence the voters. The State Department hesitated to advise the Italian Government to hold the elections before the end of November because they were afraid of confusion if municipal and national elections were held simultaneously. In our view the confusion would be greater if the national elections were delayed until the spring. We should try therefore to persuade the United States Delegation to accept our proposals, and incidentally we should thereby provide an answer to the criticism that we were preventing the Italians from electing the kind of Government they wanted.

If, as was likely, there was a discussion of the question of the number of Allied troops to be kept in Italy (not counting Venezia Giulia) after the end of the year, we should point out the political importance of the matter, and also try to get the United States to agree that it was definitely in their interest to see that Italy had an adequate army. It seemed necessary that a military mission should be set up in Italy for a limited period in order to train the army. We ought to try to secure that the Americans shared in this mission.

All the British authorities in Italy, and also Admiral Stone, head of the Allied Commission, strongly favoured sending a police mission to advise the Italian Government how to set their police forces on a better footing. We had no personnel to spare for this work; there were also certain objections from a political point of view to a British mission. We might therefore encourage the United States to assume responsibility in the matter. We might also let them take the lead in increasing propaganda to Italy directed towards convincing the Italians of the advantages of a democratic way of life.

After dealing with a number of questions, such as the repatriation of prisoners of war, the functions of U.N.R.R.A. in Italy, the transfer of as much business as possible from the Allied Commission to the Italian Government, and the provision of supplies, especially coal, the brief summarised arguments in favour of a plebiscite on the institutional question rather than a vote in the Constituent Assembly. We were not interested in the perpetuation of the monarchy as such, but we were concerned to get a solution of the institutional question which would secure stability and unity in the country. There were obvious objections—including the Decree Law of June 1944, which placed the responsibility for settling the institutional question on the Assembly—against an Anglo-American initiative in favour of a plebiscite, but the Assembly itself could refer its recommendations to a plebiscite. The State Department inclined to favour our suggestion that if the Italian Government asked for our views, we should

approve of a plebiscite. We might discuss with the Americans whether we and they should try to induce the Italians to raise the question with us.

Another brief—in connexion with the Italian peace treaty—dealt (a) with the future of the Italian islands in the Mediterranean and the Italian colonies. The general conclusions were as follows: We wanted for strategical reasons to ensure that the Italian overseas possessions did not come under the control of potential enemy States, but we had no wish to annex these possessions and indeed could not do so without breaking the Atlantic Charter. The colonies were economic liabilities; we did not want to incur the additional expense and responsibilities involved in taking them over, or to lay ourselves open to charges of British imperialism. The best way of providing for the future of the territories was to bring them within the scope of international trusteeship. We suggested tentatively that Cyrenaica might be made into a nominally independent Arab emirate under Sheik Seyyid el Idris (to whom we had given a pledge that the Senussi should not again fall under Italian domination). Great Britain might be the trustee. Tripolitania might be given in trusteeship to Italy. Eritrea was an artificial creation and might be divided on ethnic lines; the western lowlands should go to the Sudan and the remainder to Ethiopia. The elimination of Italian rule would give an opportunity for unifying all Somali-inhabited territories. We did not want to assume responsibility for the administration and security of a greater Somalia, and would welcome American acceptance of the trusteeship. In this case we would agree to the transfer to Somalia of the British Somali tribes if they so wished. If the United States would not accept the responsibility, we might have to do so in view of the strategic position of the territories on the flank of one of our main sea communications. The whole plan, however, would depend on the willingness of Ethiopia to cede the Ogaden; otherwise there would certainly be frontier trouble.

We might treat Pantellaria and the Pelagian islands as the Japanese islands in the Pacific were being treated, i.e. as a strategic area in accordance with the terms of the United Nations Charter. Great Britain might take responsibility for them, but there might be advantages in allowing Italy to continue the administration of the islands in which case they should become a trusteeship area with arrangements for inspection to ensure that their demilitarisation was maintained.¹

¹ For the discussion of matters concerning Italy at the Potsdam Conference, see Volume V, Chapter LXIX, section (iv).

(a) U5497/51/70; F.O. Potsdam archives, briefs/52.

CHAPTER XLV

Great Britain and Russo-Polish relations February–July 1945

(i)

The Moscow Commission, February 25–March 8: M. Molotov's refusal to accept the British and American interpretation of the Yalta communiqué: the Prime Minister's proposal for a British and American communication to Stalin.

- (a) **T**he Moscow Commission set up by the Yalta Conference¹ held its first meeting on February 23, 1945. Sir A. Clark Kerr and Mr. Harriman had discussed their procedure before the meeting and had agreed on a common line of action. M. Molotov accepted their proposal that discussions with the Poles should begin at once. He made no difficulties about the names of 'non-Lublin' Poles from inside Poland. When the Ambassadors suggested the names of MM. Mikolajczyk, Romer and Grabski from outside Poland, M. Molotov said that the 'Warsaw Poles' might object to M. Mikolajczyk. Sir A. Clark Kerr said that the Commission should not be influenced by the likes or dislikes of the Warsaw Poles. M. Molotov thought that they should be consulted. Sir A. Clark Kerr asked whether M. Molotov wanted the Commission to be influenced by any objection from the Warsaw Poles to M. Mikolajczyk. M. Molotov replied with emphasis that the Commission must be independent. Nonetheless he insisted that the views of the Warsaw Poles should be ascertained 'for information'. The Polish Provisional Government sent an arrogant reply on February 25 to the request from the Commission for observations. They accepted the invitation to Moscow on behalf of MM. Bierut, Morawski, and Zymierski, but complained of the 'one-sidedness' of the selection of the other candidates for consultation. They rejected M. Witos because he had gone into hiding after the liberation of the country, and to MM. Mikolajczyk and Romer on the allegation that they were hostile to the Yalta decisions.
- (c) The Commission held its second meeting on February 27 to

¹ See above, Chapter XL, sections (v) and (vi).

(a) N1981, 2757/6/55. (b) N2071/6/55. (c) N2091, 2758/6/55.

consider M. Bierut's reply. Sir A. Clark Kerr and Mr. Harriman complained that M. Bierut had either misunderstood the Yalta decisions or was acting in bad faith. He seemed to consider his Government and their nominees as the only expression of democratic opinion in Poland and to wish to dictate to the Commission. His remarks about M. Witos showed a deliberate desire to ignore a leading Polish democratic leader, and his frivolous charges against M. Mikolajczyk a complete misunderstanding of the importance of getting the goodwill of world opinion. The two Ambassadors said (a) that the participation of M. Mikolajczyk in the consultations was essential in order to show that the Commission was trying to get an honest and fair solution of the Polish question. The Ambassadors, however, did not wish to insist on all the other names which they had suggested; Sir A. Clark Kerr put forward about a dozen more names mentioned by M. Mikolajczyk.

M. Molotov maintained at this meeting that, according to the terms of the Yalta declaration, the consultations at Moscow were to be 'in the first instance' with the representatives of the Polish Provisional Government. There was in fact a difference of phrasing in the Russian and British texts. The Russian text read 'to consult in Moscow in the first instance with members of the present Provisional Government and with other Polish democratic leaders from within Poland and from abroad', whereas the British text read 'to consult in the first instance in Moscow with members, etc.'

In any event Mr. Harriman wanted to get the Warsaw Poles to Moscow at once in the hope of convincing them that they had misunderstood the intentions of the Yalta Conference. Sir A. Clark Kerr inclined to accept this plan. It was therefore agreed to invite them at once, but to tell them not to make a public announcement of their coming. The Ambassadors hoped that this announcement could be made simultaneously with that of a list of other Poles to be called.

The Foreign Office thought that the Ambassadors' tactics were wrong. Sir A. Clark Kerr was therefore instructed that a simultaneous invitation to the three categories of Poles was essential, and that we could not agree to the Russian attempt to twist the wording of the Yalta communiqué to mean that in the first instance the Provisional Government were to be consulted. The invitation now sent to M. Bierut would confirm the suspicions of the critics of the agreement throughout the world that we were concerned merely with introducing some respectable elements into the Lublin Government and not with setting up a new Government.

Since it was too late to withdraw the invitation to M. Bierut, Sir A. Clark Kerr was instructed to ensure that the presence of the

(a) N2090/6/55.

Warsaw Poles was kept secret and that invitations should be sent out at once to the other groups so that all the Poles from Poland could arrive about the same time. The Russians almost certainly knew the whereabouts of most if not all of the Poles from Poland on our list. If they did not produce them quickly the reason would be that they had refused to come, or that they had already been liquidated, or that the Russians did not wish to have them in Moscow and were therefore pretending that they could not find them.

- (a) During the meeting on February 27 M. Molotov had offered to grant facilities for British and American observers to go to Poland in order to provide their respective Governments with direct sources of information. Sir A. Clark Kerr said that, if the presence of such representatives were not to carry the implication that we were recognising the Provisional Government, he would be glad to recommend it. After some discussion M. Molotov suggested that the proposal should be held over for the time.
- (b) The Prime Minister sent a message to Sir A. Clark Kerr on February 28 that it was of the greatest importance to have direct sources of information in Poland, and that we should accept M. Molotov's 'friendly offer'. The despatch of a few people into a country did not mean recognising a Government. The Polish Government in London had been spreading reports of wholesale deportations and liquidations in Poland; we had no means of denying or disproving these reports. The London Poles also wished to prevent any Poles going from Great Britain for the consultations; they hoped to wreck the Yalta policy and, if possible, to cause a rift between the Russians and the Western Democracies. On the other hand the Lublin Poles had an obvious interest in keeping the whole power in their hands. 'Both extreme sets of Poles will behave as badly as possible. The only way to defeat these most dangerous manoeuvres is to insist upon invitations being sent to the widest circle at the earliest moment. Mikolajczyk is of course a decisive figure. If he were not enabled to come, a very serious position would be created.'

The Prime Minister also referred in his message to the strong parliamentary criticism of British policy on Poland. This criticism took place in a general debate on the Yalta Conference.¹ The Prime Minister opened the debate on February 27. He said that there would be no binding restriction on the scope and method of the consultations under the auspices of the Commission. We should do all in our power to make these consultations as wide as possible. The Poles would have full freedom to make their views known to the Commission and to reach agreement upon the composition of the

¹ *Parl. Deb., 5th Ser., H. of C., Vol. 408, cols. 1267-1672 passim.*

(a) N2093/6/55. (b) T226/5 (Churchill Papers/356; N2093/6/55).

new Government. The Prime Minister laid special emphasis upon the provision for free elections. He said that we should have preferred the simultaneous dissolution of the London and Lublin Governments and the creation of a new Government. In any case we should continue to recognise the London Government until a new Government had been formed in accordance with the Yalta decisions.

Mr. Eden spoke on February 28 and March 1 in the debate. He said plainly that he disliked the Lublin Government, and that its members had not impressed Mr. Churchill or himself favourably during the October talks in Moscow. Mr. Eden repeated that we should continue to recognise the London Government. He hoped that the consultations would result in the inclusion within the new Government of those Poles inside and outside Poland who had the largest following although they were not represented in the London or Lublin Governments.

Meanwhile on February 28 the State Department had instructed (a) Mr. Harriman on lines similar to the original instructions to Sir A. Clark Kerr.¹ The instructions laid down that the Commission should act as an arbitrator, and not itself choose the new Government; that no candidate should be excluded without convincing and unanimously accepted evidence of his unfitness, and that particular attention should be paid to the representation of Poles abroad with a view to heartening the Polish forces and reassuring them of their ultimate return to Poland. The State Department wished a stop to be put to the purge going on in Poland. In order to preserve the fiction of the independence of the Lublin Government, and to avoid placing responsibility for the purge on the Soviet Government, the Commission should address the Lublin Poles in the matter.

The Commission met again on March 1. Sir A. Clark Kerr urged (b) M. Molotov to agree to invite the five persons from Poland on the British list simultaneously with the Lublin representatives. He did not insist on a simultaneous invitation to M. Mikolajczyk since the latter had said that before committing himself he wanted to know who was coming from Poland. With Mr. Harriman's support Sir A. Clark Kerr said that the necessary confidence in the Commission's work could not be created if only the Lublin representatives or their close associates were invited at the outset. He mentioned the British parliamentary criticism of the Yalta decision.

M. Molotov appeared to have been disturbed by this criticism, and by the Prime Minister's reaffirmation that we should continue to

¹ See above, pp. 276-77.

(a) N2215/6/55. (b) N2267, 3612/6/55.

recognise the London Government until a new Government had been formed, and also by Mr. Eden's remarks about the Lublin Poles. M. Molotov protested that the Commission could not be guided by the views of the House of Commons, and that any Poles to be invited must have accepted the Yalta decision. He claimed that M. Mikolajczyk did not accept it. He also maintained that the Polish Provisional Government, upon whom the new Government was to be built, must be consulted about the persons to be invited to Moscow. M. Molotov would accept only M. Grabski and two others from the British list, though he promised to study other names. He agreed, however, to telegraph to M. Bierut asking him and his colleagues to postpone their coming to Moscow.

(a) Sir A. Clark Kerr thought that M. Molotov wanted a solution, and that he was trying to be honest but that he might have committed himself in some way to the Warsaw Poles. Nevertheless before the next meeting the chances of a satisfactory agreement were clearly diminishing. The evidence produced by the Poles in London of mass arrests and purges continued; Mme Arciszewska, the wife of the Polish Prime Minister, who was working in the Polish Red Cross, was reported to have been arrested on February 20 by the N.K.V.D. or the Lublin agents.¹

(b) At the meeting on March 1 Sir A. Clark Kerr told M. Molotov that the British Government would like to send observers to Poland. Mr. Harriman, on his own authority, said that the United States also would do so. M. Molotov was disconcerted at this prompt acceptance of his offer. He said that, if only for reasons of practical convenience, the visit of our observers would have to be 'cleared' with the Warsaw Government. He asked how the functions of the observers should be described. The Foreign Office replied on the night of March 2-3 that reference to the Warsaw Government must be limited to informing them of the decision to send the observers, and to questions of practical arrangement. We could not allow the Warsaw Government to refuse to receive the observers or to restrict the scope of their work.

The Foreign Office proposed to describe the observers as a 'British Mission whose functions will be to satisfy themselves and report to His Majesty's Government on present conditions in Poland, and also on the prospects of the necessary conditions being created

(c) ¹Mme Arciszewska was the Polish Prime Minister's second wife. His first wife was still living, and was also in Poland. The Foreign Office instructed Sir A. Clark Kerr on March 1 to make enquiries about the arrest of Mme Arciszewska and other Polish Red Cross workers. Sir A. Clark Kerr replied on March 5 that the Soviet Government were taking steps to release Mme Arciszewska: M. Molotov alleged that she had been arrested for hostile action against Soviet troops in Poland. Mme Arciszewska was released on condition that she reported daily to the police.

(a) N2269/6/55. (b) N2275/6/55. (c) N2383, 2391, 3364/6/55.

for holding elections on the basis laid down in the Crimea communiqué'. We hoped that the Mission would consist of four or five public men, possibly including Members of Parliament.

Sir A. Clark Kerr replied to the Foreign Office proposal on (a) March 3 that there was little chance of persuading the Russians to include in a statement about the proposed Mission any reference to observing the elections. He suggested that the functions of the Mission should be defined as those of assisting His Majesty's Ambassador in Moscow in his capacity as representative of His Majesty's Government on the Polish Commission set up under the Crimea communiqué.

The Foreign Office again instructed Sir A. Clark Kerr on March 4 (b) that we and the Americans ought not to give way either on the question of 'consulting' the Lublin Poles or of barring 'non-Lublin' candidates from the discussions. We wanted to try to establish the principle of a 'general armistice' between the 'Lublin' and 'non-Lublin' Poles pending the formation of a new government. The decision to establish such a principle must be a counsel of perfection, but the whole Polish question was so fundamental that we had to be perfectionists.

At the same time the Foreign Office asked Lord Halifax to put before the United States Government a proposal for a joint communication in Moscow to M. Molotov. The communication—as suggested in the telegram—restated the view that the basic conception underlying the Crimean communiqué was that the three Powers should take steps to bring about in Poland as soon as possible conditions in which free and unfettered elections could be held. As a first step a Government was to be set up in Poland on 'a broader democratic basis', i.e. representative of as many political elements as possible and of leading men including democratic leaders from Poland itself and from among Poles abroad. The British and United States Governments, as the Soviet Government knew, regarded the Lublin administration as entirely unrepresentative and could not recognise it; they were, as the Soviet Government also knew, extremely uneasy over many of the actions of this administration against all Poles whom it did not represent and whom it wished to discredit and eliminate from public life.

Such action was contrary to the spirit and intention of the Crimea agreement. The British and American Governments therefore considered that the three Governments should do all in their power to stop it and to restrain the Lublin administration from further measures of a fundamental character affecting social, constitutional,

(a) N2281, 2294/6/55. (b) N2269/6/55.

economic or political conditions in Poland. Since the Soviet Government alone were in relations with the Lublin administration, they should use their utmost influence to this end.

The draft communication then dealt with the actual work of the Commission. It repeated the views already held by the British and United States Governments, and emphasised the holding of free elections as the whole object of the settlement. This purpose would be frustrated if any name suggested to the Commission for the consultations in Moscow were refused unless all three members agreed that the person in question did not fulfil the qualifications of being a 'democratic leader'. There was no basis in fact for the Russian argument that the text of the Crimea communiqué required the Lublin representatives to be consulted before other Polish democratic leaders. The phrase in question was suggested, in its English form, at the conference, by the United States delegation; it was accepted by the Conference and remained unchanged during the discussions. The British and American Governments were therefore unable to accept the Russian contention that M. Bierut and his colleagues had a right to prior consultation or that their views should be taken into account in deciding the names of other democratic leaders to be invited to meet the Commission. Furthermore, in view of the general difficulties about getting information about Poles in Poland, the Poles first invited to Moscow should have the right to make suggestions about other names.

- (a) The United States Government, however, were unwilling to go as far as the British Government regarded as necessary. They did not think that the Russians would accept the kind of Mission which the Foreign Office wished to send; they also considered it tactically a mistake to raise the question of the elections before we had secured the appointment of a satisfactory Government. Lord Halifax was instructed to point out the danger that, if we did not now intervene to get fair treatment for the anti-Lublin Poles, the conditions for holding free elections would be destroyed even before the new Government was set up; we and the Americans would then be accused—rightly—of having subscribed at the Crimea Conference to a formula which we knew to be unworkable.
- (b) In making representations to M. Molotov at the fourth meeting of the Commission on March 5 Sir A. Clark Kerr was thus unable to get Mr. Harriman's support to a reference to the supervision of the elections. The meeting ended without any concession from M. Molotov. He maintained his reading of the communiqué to the effect that the Warsaw Poles should be given the first hearing. He asked the Ambassadors to submit to their Governments a proposal that,

(a) N2295/6/55. (b) N2415, 2416, 2417/6/55.

without prejudice to further invitations, we should call to Moscow M. Bierut and two of his colleagues, two Poles from London and two from Warsaw about whose 'democratic' views there was no doubt. The Ambassadors said that their Governments would certainly reject this proposal unless the Poles from London and Poland were really outstanding men. It was clear from the discussion that M. Molotov intended to continue his effort to exclude M. Mikolajczyk. After three hours of discussion the meeting ended with M. Molotov insisting that his proposal should be put to the British and United States Governments.

The War Cabinet discussed Sir A. Clark Kerr's report of the (a) position on March 6. The Prime Minister said that we had been fully entitled to the line we had adopted during the parliamentary debate, since we were bound to assume the good faith of an Ally in the execution of an agreement so recently signed. If, however, it became clear that the Russians were not intending to carry out the conditions to which we had agreed, we should have to tell the whole story to Parliament. We could not allow Parliament to get the impression that they had been deceived. Subject, therefore, to further information from Sir A. Clark Kerr, we must tell the Russians that we could not accept their proposals. We were entitled to American support in the matter, and indeed could not help the Poles without such support. If Stalin were behind the Russian proposals, he might give way before a warning (after we had consulted the Americans) that otherwise we should have to explain with regret to Parliament that the Yalta agreement had failed.

After the Cabinet meeting the Foreign Office received another (b) telegram from Sir A. Clark Kerr saying that he had told M. Molotov that he could now give him a description of the functions of our Mission. M. Molotov had interrupted him to say that he could do nothing further in the matter because we had refused to invite the Warsaw Poles to Moscow and Mr. Eden had made some contemptuous remarks about them in the House of Commons. M. Molotov said that Sir A. Clark Kerr should address himself directly to the 'Polish Ambassador' in Moscow.

The Prime Minister now decided to send a message to President Roosevelt. The message, which was telegraphed on the night of (c) March 8-9, began by discussing the position in Roumania and Greece. The Prime Minister then turned to the Polish question. He said that the majorities in the House of Commons did not disclose

(a) WM(45)26.5, C.A.; N2572/6/55. (b) N2417/6/55. (c) T260/5, No. 905 (Churchill Papers/356; N2603/6/55).

the strong undercurrent of feeling among all parties and classes 'and in our own hearts' about a Soviet domination of Poland. The Prime Minister had based his statement in Parliament on the assumption that the Yalta agreement would be carried out in the letter and the spirit. A very grave situation would be reached if it were seen that we had been deceived and that the well known Communist technique was being applied behind closed doors in Poland by the Russians or their puppets. The Prime Minister thought that the President, and American public opinion, would be equally affected. Therefore at the time when everything in the military sphere was going so well, there would be an open rift between us and Russia, not confined, at all events in Great Britain, to Government opinion, but running deep down through the masses of the people.

The Prime Minister then said that M. Molotov was now trying to make a farce of consultations with the non-Lublin Poles, and that the new Government in Poland would merely be the Lublin Government dressed up to look more respectable to the ignorant. M. Molotov's withdrawal of his offer about observers meant that he wanted to prevent us from seeing the liquidations and deportations and all the other methods of setting up a totalitarian régime before the elections and even before the establishment of a new Government. If we did not get things right now, the world would soon see that, in signing the Crimea settlement, he and the President had underwritten a fraudulent prospectus.

The Prime Minister was already pledged to tell Parliament if the new Government could not be established in the spirit of the Yalta declaration. He felt sure that the only way to stop M. Molotov's tactics was to send a message to Stalin setting out the essentials upon which there must be agreement if Parliament were not to be told that the Yalta policy had failed. The Prime Minister thought that far more was involved than the case of Poland. The Polish question was a test between us and the Russians of the meaning to be attached to such terms as 'democracy, sovereignty, independence, representative government, and free and unfettered elections'.

The Prime Minister therefore proposed to send a message to Stalin and hoped that the President would send a similar message containing the same minimum requirements. The message was in the following terms:

'I am sorry to say that the discussions in the Moscow Commission on Poland show that M. Molotov has quite a different view from us as to how the Crimea decision on Poland should be put into effect. As you know nobody here believes that the present Warsaw administration is really representative and criticism of the decision in Parliament took the line that the discussions in Moscow would not result in a really representative Government being set up and that,

if this was so, all hope of free elections disappeared; all parties were also exercised about the reports that deportations, liquidations and other oppressive measures were being put into practice on a wide scale by the Warsaw administration against those likely to disagree with them. Feeling confident of your co-operation in this matter, Eden and I pledged ourselves to Parliament that we would inform them if the fears of our critics were fulfilled. I am bound to tell you that I should have to make a statement of our failure to Parliament if the Commission in Moscow were not in the end able to agree on the following basis:

(a) M. Molotov appears to be contending that the terms of the Crimea communiqué established for the present Warsaw administration an absolute right of prior consultation on all points. In the English text the passage of the communiqué in question, which was an American draft, cannot bear this interpretation. M. Molotov's construction therefore cannot be accepted.

(b) All Poles nominated by any of the three Governments shall be accepted for the consultations unless ruled out by unanimous decision of the Commission, and every effort made to produce them before the Commission at the earliest possible moment; the Commission should ensure to the Poles invited facilities for communicating with other Poles whom they wish to consult whether in Poland or outside and the right to suggest to the Commission the names of other Poles who should be invited to its proceedings. All Poles appearing before the Commission would naturally enjoy complete freedom of movement and of communication among themselves while in Moscow and would be at liberty to depart whither they chose upon the conclusion of the consultations. M. Molotov has raised objections to inviting M. Mikolajczyk but his presence would certainly be vital.

(c) The Poles invited for consultations should discuss among themselves with a view to reaching agreement upon the composition of a Government truly representative of the various sections of Polish opinion present before the Commission. The discussions should also cover the question of the exercise of the Presidential functions. The Commission should preside over these discussions in an impartial arbitral capacity.

(d) Pending the conclusion of the Commission's discussions the Soviet Government should use its utmost influence to prevent the Warsaw administration from taking any further legal or administrative action of a fundamental character affecting social, constitutional, economic, or political conditions in Poland.

(e) The Soviet Government should make arrangements to enable British and American observers to visit Poland and report upon conditions there in accordance with the offer spontaneously made by M. Molotov at an earlier stage in the Commission's discussions.'

(ii)

Anglo-American exchanges of view on an approach to the Soviet Government: communications of March 19 to M. Molotov (March 8–19, 1945).

- (a) Sir A. Clark Kerr was inclined to think that before sending the proposed message to Stalin it would be better to make another
- (b) attempt to convince M. Molotov. The Americans also thought that the terms of the Prime Minister's draft were too drastic. They agreed entirely with our objectives, but considered it unsafe tactically to go beyond the actual terms of the Yalta communiqué. There was, for example, nothing in the communiqué suggesting the despatch of
- (c) British or American missions to Poland. On March 8 the State Department showed Lord Halifax instructions sent to Mr. Harriman to communicate to M. Molotov—either verbally or in writing—a statement of the American attitude. After a recapitulation of the Yalta decisions, and the reasons why these decisions had been taken, the statement pointed out that the Commission could not discharge its functions if any one of the three groups of 'democratic Poles' were permitted to dictate to the others on the choice of persons to be invited for consultation. A further condition of success was a 'maximum amount of political tranquillity inside Poland during the period of negotiations'. The United States Government therefore suggested that the Commission should 'request rival political groups to adopt a political truce in Poland and to refrain reciprocally from any activities or actions which might hamper the unity of all democratic Polish elements both within and without Poland'.

In view of the divergence between the British and American proposals the Foreign Office instructed Lord Halifax in the evening of March 9 (and again on March 10) to suggest that Mr. Harriman should be asked not to act on his instructions while the President and the Prime Minister were engaged in discussing what should be done. On the night of March 9–10 the Prime Minister telegraphed to President Roosevelt that he was distressed at the instructions to Mr. Harriman to propose a political truce. The Prime Minister did not know what the answer of the London Poles would be to this proposal. They were continuing to assert, with much detail, that their friends in Poland were being arrested, deported, and liquidated on a large scale. At best they would put forward impossible conditions for a truce.

The Lublin Poles would probably answer that their Government alone could ensure the 'maximum amount of political tranquillity inside Poland'; that they already represented the great mass of the

(a) N2604/6/55. (b) N2562/6/55. (c) N2525/6/55. (d) T266/5, No. 907 (Churchill Papers/356; N2568/6/55).

'democratic forces' in Poland, and that they could not join hands with émigré traitors or Fascist collaborators or landlords, and so on, according to the usual technique. Meanwhile we should not be allowed inside the country or have any means of informing ourselves about the position. A long period of delay would suit the Soviet Government very well since it would allow the process of liquidation to run its full course. We should provide this delay if we opened out now into undefined proposals for a political truce between the Polish parties ('whose hatreds would eat into live steel'), and we might find that our proposals implied the abandonment of all the clear-cut requests which the Prime Minister had set out in his draft message to Stalin.

The Prime Minister would therefore find it very difficult to join in the project of a political truce. He said that feeling in Great Britain was very strong; four Ministers had abstained from voting on the Yalta debate and two had already resigned. The Prime Minister asked that Mr. Harriman's instructions should be suspended until the President had given full consideration to his own draft message.

On March 10 the Prime Minister telegraphed to the President a long summary of information received from M. Arciszewski about (a) the measures taken in Poland between January 17 and March 1, 1945, against Poles who did not support the Lublin administration. The Prime Minister thought that the information was stated with restraint; the fact that we could not guarantee it emphasised the need for sending our own observers into the country. The information covered all the provinces of Poland, and reported everywhere the familiar terrorist activities—denunciations, arrests, executions, deportations—by the N.K.V.D. and their Lublin agents. In his covering letter M. Arciszewski described the terrorist activities as increasing in violence and threatening the very existence of the independent and most patriotic section of the Polish nation. He reminded the Prime Minister of his (M. Arciszewski's) appeal of February 3¹ and asked whether he could be told the result of our intervention.

The President replied to the Prime Minister on March 11. He said (b) that on the American view the chances of stopping the measures against the non-Lublin Poles would be greatly increased if the matter were approached under the guise of a general political truce. Stalin had spoken at Yalta of the terrorist activities of the Polish Underground movement against the Soviet army and the Lublin Poles. These allegations might be untrue, but the Russians had made them, and would certainly refuse any demand that the Lublin Poles alone

¹ See above, p. 250.

(a) T274/5, No. 909 (Churchill Papers/365; N2727/6/55). (b) T277/5, No. 713 (Churchill Papers/356; N2752/6/55).

should be forced to stop the persecution of their political opponents. We should also take care to avoid giving the impression that we wanted to call a halt in the land reforms. Otherwise the Lublin Poles would have an opportunity of claiming that they alone were defending the interests of the peasants against the landlords.

The President, however, was willing to ensure that Mr. Harriman did not carry out his instructions until Sir A. Clark Kerr had been instructed to act. He said that Mr. Harriman was being told to press the question of sending observers into Poland but that it would be better to ask for observers at a lower level than the mission proposed by the Prime Minister.¹

- (a) The Prime Minister replied on March 13 that we could obviously make no progress at Moscow without the President's aid, and that if we and the Americans did not agree, the fate of Poland was sealed. The Prime Minister would soon be questioned in Parliament about the negotiations, and would have to tell the truth. He also realised that time was on the side of the Lublin Poles. Nonetheless, in view of the President's wishes, he would defer for the time his message to Stalin, but he asked the President to agree that the instructions to the British and American Ambassadors should cover the points (a) to (e) in his draft. He was convinced that the work at Yalta would have been in vain unless the Russians could be induced to accept these fundamental points. He also said that if the Russians accepted the American suggestion for a political truce, they would claim almost at once that the non-Lublin Poles were breaking it, and therefore that the Lublin Poles could not be held to it.

The Prime Minister summed up the position very plainly:

'At Yalta . . . we agreed to take the Russian view of the frontier line. Poland has lost her frontier. Is she now to lose her freedom? That is the question which will undoubtedly have to be fought out in Parliament and in public here. I do not wish to reveal a divergence between the British and the United States Government, but it would certainly be necessary for me to make it clear that we are in presence of a great failure and an utter breakdown of what was settled at Yalta, but that we British have not the necessary strength to carry the matter further and that the limits of our capacity to act have been reached. The moment that Molotov sees that he has beaten us away from the whole process of consultation among Poles to form a new Government, he will know that we will put up with anything.'

On the other hand 'combined dogged pressure and persistence' on the Anglo-American side would 'very likely succeed'.

¹ In fact Sir A. Clark Kerr had asked for observers on a lower level and had not put to M. Molotov the Prime Minister's proposal for an important mission.

(a) T285/5, No. 910, Churchill Papers/356.

On March 16 the President replied to the Prime Minister's (a) message.¹ He did not think that there was any divergence between the policy of the two Governments; on the other hand, until they had 'made the effort to overcome the obstacles incurred in the negotiations at Moscow', he would not agree that the Yalta agreement had broken down. The President referred in detail to the Prime Minister's five points. He accepted points (a) and (c). He did not think that M. Molotov would accept the proposal in point (b) that any Pole could be invited unless all three members of the Commission objected. He continued to support his proposal for a political truce, but agreed to include the Prime Minister's wording of point (e) in his instructions. The President also agreed that we could not invite the Lublin Poles to the San Francisco Conference.²

Meanwhile Sir A. Clark Kerr had telegraphed during the night of (b) March 15-16 a draft communication to the Soviet Government covering as far as possible both the British and American views. Sir A. Clark Kerr had discussed the draft with Mr. Harriman. His wording for the Prime Minister's point (a) was even more definite than in the British draft. Point (b) was also stated explicitly, and a special reference was made to the British and American insistence upon inviting M. Mikolajczyk to the consultations. Point (c) was introduced with slightly different wording. On point (d) Sir A. Clark Kerr said that Mr. Harriman thought that if we included a reference to measures of land reform, etc. we might be accused of holding up measures which the Provisional Government regarded as necessary. It was also clear that the Provisional Government would not agree to the postponement of anything likely to increase their popularity.

¹ The Prime Minister has noted subsequently (*Second World War*, VI (Cassell, 1954), p. 377) that he 'had the feeling' at this time that 'except for occasional flashes of courage and insight', the telegrams which the President was sending were 'not his own'. The Prime Minister thought that this reply of March 16 was the work of the State Department. On March 18 the Prime Minister telegraphed to the President his hope that (c) 'rather numerous telegrams I have to send you on so many of our difficult and international affairs are not becoming a bore to you. Our friendship is the rock on which I build for the future of the world so long as I am one of the builders.' Mr. Roosevelt did not reply to this telegram. On March 30 the Prime Minister telegraphed again that he was (d) glad to see, from the abundance of messages which he had just received, that the President was back in Washington, and in such vigour. He asked whether the President had received his telegram of March 18, though no answer to it was required. Mr. Roosevelt replied, not very warmly, that he had received the telegram. Mr. Hopkins told Mr. Eden (e) and Lord Halifax on April 15 that hardly any of Mr. Roosevelt's recent messages had been his own, not even the last sentence of his message to Stalin of April 5.

² On March 9 the Soviet Government had raised this question for a second time. On March 13 they refused to take part in the work of setting up the European Inland Transport Organisation unless the Lublin Poles were represented on it. (f)

(a) T292/5, No. 718 (Churchill Papers/356; N2897/6/55). (b) N2842/6/55. (c) T298/5, No. 914, Churchill Papers/473. (d) T367/5, No. 927, Churchill Papers/473. (e) T376/5, No. 731, Churchill Papers/473. (f) U1716/12/70.

Sir A. Clark Kerr suggested, as a modified formula which would also cover the case of terrorist activities without proposing a political truce:

‘Inasmuch as it was agreed in the Crimea communiqué that the new situation in Poland called for the establishment of a new and more broadly based Polish Provisional Government pledged to the holding of free elections as soon as possible, it follows in the view of His Majesty’s Government (United States Government) that any fundamental measures affecting the future of the Polish State should await the establishment of that Provisional Government and be subject to final confirmation after the elections. As an essential condition for successful negotiations in Moscow for the formation of the new Provisional Government as well as for the carrying out by that new Government of its pledge of “holding free and unfettered elections” as provided in the communiqué it is the opinion of His Majesty’s Government (United States Government) that there should be the maximum amount of political tranquillity inside Poland during the political negotiations. His Majesty’s Government (United States Government) therefore assume that no action will be taken by the provisional authorities in Poland against any individuals or groups there, which might disturb the atmosphere in which the present negotiations are taking place and so prejudice their successful outcome. If as may be expected this is also the view of the Soviet Government, His Majesty’s Government (United States Government) trust this will be made clear to the Polish Provisional Government, of course without prejudice to the normal working of the Provisional Government.’¹

Sir A. Clark Kerr then proposed to meet point (e) by stating that the British and United States Governments wished to revert to M. Molotov’s suggestions about observers. Since it was essential for their representatives on the Commission to receive direct reports from their representatives in Poland the two Governments must urgently press the Soviet Government to make the necessary arrangements to this effect.

- (a) The Prime Minister telegraphed to President Roosevelt on the night of March 16–17 that he had received the draft drawn up by Sir A. Clark Kerr after consultation with Mr. Harriman, and that he liked the draft and hoped that the President would accept it. The Prime Minister said once again that he could not agree with the President’s proposal for a political truce. He regarded the proposal as ‘actively dangerous’. ‘How can we guarantee that nothing would be said or done in Poland or by the Polish Government’s supporters

¹ The words from ‘of course’ to the end of the sentence were omitted from the draft as telegraphed to Washington. The Foreign Office considered that the inclusion of these words would permit an evasion of our requirements.

(a) T294/5, No. 912 (Churchill Papers/356; N2906/6/55).

[in London] which the Russians could not parade as a breach of the truce?' We should then be led 'into interminable delays and a dead end in which some at least of the blame may well be earned by the London Polish Government'. The Prime Minister also regarded it as essential that British and American representatives should be allowed into Poland. According to our information, even the liaison officers who were to help in bringing out our prisoners of war had now been told to leave Poland. There was no doubt that the Russians did not want us to see what was happening in the country.

The Foreign Office instructed Lord Halifax at the same time to go (a) through our proposals point by point with the State Department and to show that without agreement on them with the Russians there could be no progress towards setting up a representative Government in Poland. Thus M. Molotov was trying to exclude M. Mikolajczyk from the discussions and the Lublin Poles had started a campaign of slander against other Poles on our list. It was clear that there would be disagreement with M. Molotov about the Poles to be invited and, as a result, endless delay, unless we insisted now on a decision upon the method of selection in the event of a failure to secure unanimous approval for the names put forward.

It was also necessary that freedom of movement and communication should be assured to the Poles invited to Moscow. Otherwise M. Mikolajczyk might well refuse to go; in any case the anti-Lublin Poles would be discussing under difficulties while in Moscow, and under threat of what might afterwards happen to them. Similarly our point (c) was of great importance. The Poles in London felt that the Commission was weighted against them because it was located in Moscow and that our two Ambassadors, who had other business to settle with M. Molotov, were at a disadvantage. We also had no evidence that M. Molotov was likely to resist our proposals regarding the character of the discussions and the arbitral capacity of the Commission. Finally, all our information showed that the Russians were most anxious to prevent us from seeing what was happening in Poland. They were obviously rigging the situation in advance. If we did not get our observers into the country as a check, we might well find at the elections that real party representatives and party organisations had been liquidated.

The President and the State Department accepted the greater part (b) of Sir A. Clark Kerr's redraft. They agreed to points (a) and (c) in full. On point (b) instead of the phrase 'unless ruled out by a unanimous decision of the Commission', they proposed 'unless conclusive evidence is produced to show that they do not represent democratic elements in the country'. They added two sentences

(a) N2842/6/55. (b) N2925, 2939, 2940/6/55; T301/5, No. 719 (Churchill Papers/356; N3021/6/55).

making it clear that in weighing such evidence the Soviet Government would be expected to refrain from exercising a unilateral veto and that the Lublin Poles would not have the right to exclude anyone.

On the second part of point (b) the State Department felt very doubtful about guaranteeing to the Polish delegates 'liberty to depart whither they chose at the conclusion of the consultations'. If the consultations succeeded, M. Mikolajczyk and the other non-Lublin Poles would be free to go to Poland. If, on the other hand, there were a break-down, these Poles would not want to return to Poland where indeed their lives might be in danger. We could guarantee a safe conduct to London, but we could not very well ask the Soviet Government without offence to give such an undertaking.

The State Department accepted point (d) as redrafted by Sir A. Clark Kerr. They added a sentence to the effect that we would use our 'good offices' with the Polish Government. They felt that this sentence did not commit us to any definite action or allow the Russians to plead breach of faith, but that it avoided the appearance of imputing bad faith to the Lublin Poles alone.

- (a) The Prime Minister telegraphed to the President on March 19 that he agreed with the draft as amended. The two Ambassadors
- (b) therefore sent it on this day in the form of separate but identical notes to M. Molotov.

(iii)

M. Molotov's rejection of the Anglo-American interpretation of the Yalta agreement: Anglo-American discussions on procedure: messages from the President and the Prime Minister to Stalin: (March 23–April 1, 1945).

- (c) On the morning of March 23 M. Molotov sent to the two Ambassadors a memorandum in answer to their notes. The memorandum, in slightly shortened form, was as follows:

"The Crimea Conference agreed that the "Provisional Government which is functioning in Poland should be reorganised on a broader democratic basis with the inclusion of democratic leaders from Poland itself and Poles from abroad". Thus the new reorganised Polish Government which will be called the Polish Provisional Government of National Unity must be formed on the basis of the present Provisional Government functioning in Poland. Any other interpretation of the decisions of the Crimea Conference would be a violation of those decisions. It is therefore entirely natural that in decisions of the Crimea Conference the Polish emigrant Government should not be mentioned at all whereas present Provisional Government is considered in these decisions as the core of the above-mentioned Government of

(a) T302'5, No. 916 (Churchill Papers/356; N3021/6/55). (b) N3099/6/55.
 (c) N3204.6/55.

National Unity. In this the Soviet Government sees a recognition by British and United States Governments that only the present Provisional Government, which exercises State authority over the whole territory of Poland and which has acquired great authority among the Polish people, can become, with the inclusion of new democratic forces from Poland and abroad, a Government resting on a broader basis which was the aim of the three Allied Governments.

After this, to consider the present Provisional Government in Warsaw as only one of three groups of democratic Poland, as was done in the British Ambassador's letter of March 19, would be entirely incorrect and a violation of the proposals of the Crimea Conference to which the Soviet Government cannot give any degree of assent.

2. The first task of the Moscow Commission set up by the Crimea Conference, namely the conduct of consultations with the Polish Provisional Government and other democratic leaders from Poland and abroad, must be accomplished in accordance with the Conference's decision. Yet the Commission has not succeeded in doing this in spite of the efforts of the representative of the Soviet Government.

As is known, in the published text of the decisions of the Crimea Conference the Commission is authorised "to consult in Moscow in the first instance with members of the present Provisional Government and with other Polish democratic leaders from within Poland and from abroad". It follows from this that the Commission must consult in the first instance with present Provisional Government. This was in fact done by Moscow Commission in its first decisions of February 24 and February 27 when it invited representatives of present Provisional Government immediately to come to Moscow for consultation but however cancelled¹ after a few days at the instance of the British representative. The obligation to consult in the first instance with the Provisional Polish Government follows from the very sense of decisions of the Crimea Conference, as the final aim of the consultation is to transform the present Polish Provisional Government into a Government of National Unity which, in accordance with decisions of the Crimea Conference, must be formed on the basis of the Provisional Government now functioning in Poland. Consultation with other democratic Polish leaders must be supplementary to consultation with Provisional Polish Government, with a view to reorganising this Government on a broader basis. Moreover, according to the Crimea Conference the Provisional Polish Government as such is to be invited for consultation together with such other Polish statesmen as can be counted democratic leaders. As members of the Moscow Commission must work as a Commission, justly settling the question of precisely which Polish statesmen can be invited for consultation, a decision must be reached which is accepted by all three members of the Commission according to the Crimea decisions.

The proposal of the British Ambassador's original letter of March

¹ The text is uncertain at this point.

19 in a number of points departs from the Crimea decisions. Thus supporters of the emigrant Polish Government such as Arciszewska,¹ Anders, Raczkiewicz, and others who are openly hostile to the U.S.S.R. and Crimea decisions cannot be invited for consultation although they call themselves democrats. It is clear that other opponents too of these decisions, such as Mikolajczyk for example, are not to be included in the category of the Polish leaders consultation with whom could contribute² towards fulfilment of the decisions of the Crimean Conference.

The Soviet Government expresses its confidence that the decisions accepted unanimously by all members of the Commission regarding conduct of the consultation, will ensure in largest possible measure fulfilment of the Crimea decisions.

3. The Soviet Government learnt with astonishment of the British Government's intention to send into Poland British and American observers, inasmuch as such a proposal might offend the feelings of national dignity of the Poles. Moreover, in the decisions of the Crimea Conference this question was not even raised. In any event the British Government could clarify this question best if it were to address itself direct to the Provisional Polish Government.

4. The Soviet Government proposes that the following rules should be unanimously recognised:

(a) Commission should base its work on the fundamental rule of the Crimea Conference that the Provisional Polish Government is the basis for a new Provisional Polish Government of National Unity with the inclusion in its composition of democratic leaders from Poland and Poles from abroad.

(b) Commission should immediately begin consultation with which it has been charged, for which purpose in the first place representatives of the Provisional Polish Government should be summoned.

(c) Commission should also immediately summon for consultation those Polish democratic leaders from Poland and abroad with regard to whom there is already agreement on the part of all three members of the Commission.

(d) After this Commission should decide question of the summoning of other Polish democratic leaders from Poland and abroad whom the Commission recognises it as desirable to consult.

The Soviet Government considers that the execution of the foregoing proposals would secure fulfilment of decisions of the Crimea Conference on this question of Provisional Polish Government of National Unity and free elections which are subsequently to be held, which is the obligation of the Moscow Commission and which corresponds to the interests of democratic Poland and also of the Allied Powers.'

¹ The text reads as printed, but the reference must be to M. Arciszewski.

² The text is uncertain at this point.

The Commission met later in the day of March 23. M. Molotov (a) opened the discussion by saying that, if they were to continue their work, they must do so in accordance with the spirit of the Crimea decision which he had tried to clarify in his memorandum. The two Ambassadors said that the Commission must go on with its attempt to secure a settlement of the Polish question, but that the British and American Governments could not accept M. Molotov's interpretation of the Crimea Agreement. The essential feature of this agreement was that a fresh start should be made in Poland, not by enlarging the existing Polish Provisional Government (which was not really representative) but by reorganising it on an entirely new basis. The first task of the Commission was to bring together for consultation representatives of all the Polish democratic elements.

M. Molotov insisted that the Commission must first agree on a common interpretation of the Crimea agreement. The Soviet Government would not give up their view that the Provisional Government was to be the basis of the new Government, and not merely one of three equal groups from which the new Government would be formed. M. Molotov argued that we were proposing to include the London Government in the consultations. The Ambassadors said that they had already assured M. Molotov that no representatives would be invited from the London Government since we regarded it as irreconcilably hostile to the Soviet Union. We insisted, however, upon inviting M. Mikolajczyk.

The Ambassadors then proposed that the Commission should agree at once to invite the Poles already named by the British and United States Governments. M. Molotov said that the Commission had accepted the Prime Minister's suggestion that it should work as a body, and that he (M. Molotov) must therefore assent to the names. He went back to his old argument about the Russian interpretation of the words 'in the first instance'. He said that the Ambassadors had originally signed a telegram inviting M. Bierut to Moscow. The Ambassadors reminded M. Molotov that he had signed a telegram naming five British and American nominees from Poland and three from London as participants in the consultations. M. Bierut had objected to those nominees and M. Molotov had then withdrawn his acceptance. The Ambassadors could not allow the Commission to be influenced by M. Bierut's views on the names to be chosen. They did not wish to prevent M. Bierut from coming to Moscow, but they had to insist that the invitations to the other Poles should go out simultaneously. M. Molotov had refused to agree, and the Ambassadors had therefore resolved to postpone the invitation to M. Bierut.

Further argument followed about the names. The Ambassadors

(a) N3228, 3899/6/55.

complained that M. Molotov could not say anything about the list given to him by the Ambassadors although this list had been in his hands for nearly three weeks. The Ambassadors repeated the views of the President and the Prime Minister about the inclusion of M. Mikolajczyk and reminded M. Molotov that the Soviet Government had been willing to accept him in October as head of a new Polish Government. M. Molotov said that the Soviet Government now knew M. Mikolajczyk better and that each of his visits to Moscow had been the signal for terrorist activities in Poland in which Soviet officers had been attacked. The Ambassadors replied that the President and the Prime Minister would refuse to believe such accusations, and that they would never agree to consultations without the inclusion of M. Mikolajczyk.

- The Commission decided to adjourn until March 26. Meanwhile the Ambassadors said that they would prepare a redraft of the four (a) 'rules' in M. Molotov's memorandum. They telegraphed this new draft to London and Washington on March 24. The draft ran as follows:

'(a) Commission should base its work upon the following principles underlying decision of the Crimean Conference on Poland: new Government of National Unity is to be made broadly representative of all democratic elements of the Polish State by a reorganisation of Provisional Government now functioning in Poland with the inclusion of democratic leaders from Poland itself and Poles abroad.

(b) Commission should immediately proceed to the holding of the consultations with which it has been charged, for which purpose representatives of Provisional Government now functioning in Poland should be summoned, together with a representative group of other democratic leaders from Poland and abroad.

(c) Commission should also decide the question of the summoning of additional Polish democratic leaders from Poland and abroad, consultation with whom is recognised by Commission as desirable in the interests of fulfilment of the decisions of the Crimean Conference. In this connexion full weight should be given to the desire of any member of the Commission to call on any particular Polish democratic leader whom he may consider to be of value for the purposes in view.'

- (b) The Foreign Office instructed Sir A. Clark Kerr in the afternoon of March 25 that it would be a mistake to continue the discussions on the basis even of a redraft of M. Molotov's formula, since he would thus be able to sidetrack all the main points of the British and American communication of March 19. Sir A. Clark Kerr's redraft conceded M. Molotov's right of veto of Polish candidates for the discussion, and was not clear about our refusal to accept prior

(a) N3229/6/55. (b) N3230/6/55.

consultation with the Lublin administration. It also said nothing about the prohibition of action by the Lublin administration liable to prejudice in advance the situation in Poland or about the question of British and American observers. It was intolerable that M. Molotov's reply should have met our points either by ignoring them or by refusals. Sir A. Clark Kerr was instructed to ask for a postponement of the proposed meeting on March 26.

The Foreign Office also sent a copy of this telegram to Lord Halifax with instructions that he should ask the United States Government to send a similar message to Mr. Harriman. Lord Halifax replied on the night of March 25-6 that the State Department (a) agreed to the postponement of the meeting but that they were strongly of opinion that for the time we should not tell M. Molotov of our unwillingness to proceed on the basis of a redraft of his formula. Otherwise the Russians might take the opportunity of putting on us the responsibility for the breakdown of the discussions.

The Prime Minister was out of England at Field-Marshal Montgomery's headquarters on March 24-5. Mr. Eden sent him a (b) minute on March 24 that we could not accept a redraft of M. Molotov's proposals, and that the time had now come for a message from the Prime Minister and the President to Stalin. He also asked whether it might not be necessary to make a public statement in Parliament before Easter. Mr. Eden saw no other way of forcing the Russians to choose between mending their ways or losing Anglo-American friendship, and no other method of getting anything like a fair settlement for the Poles. He put the question whether it was of any value to go to San Francisco in these conditions and to attempt to lay the foundations of a new World Order when Anglo-American relations with Russia were so completely lacking in confidence.

The Prime Minister replied on March 25 that we could not agree (c) to redraft M. Molotov's four points, and that we should ask the President whether he would now agree to send a message jointly with the Prime Minister to Stalin, and whether this message should cover—as Mr. Eden had thought possible—other matters at issue with the Russians. The Prime Minister considered that we should tell the President that the holding of the San Francisco Conference was now in question and that if the Conference were to have any value, Great Britain and the United States would have to make a definite stand against a breach of the Yalta undertakings. We could not, however, press the case against Russia beyond the point at which we were able to get American support. Nothing was more likely to bring the United States into line with us than the prospect of risk to the San Francisco Conference.

At the Prime Minister's request the Foreign Office drew up a draft

(a) N3268/6/55. (b) P.M./45/134, N3401/6/55. (c) PMM255/5, N3402/6/55.

- (a) message for President Roosevelt. The War Cabinet approved generally on March 26 the line taken in the draft, and the Prime Minister accepted it, with a little change and rearrangement. The message
 (b) was therefore sent on the evening of March 27. The first part summed up in strong terms the British objections to M. Molotov's 'series of flat negatives . . .'.

'He persists in his view that the Yalta communiqué merely meant the addition of a few other Poles to the existing administration of Russian puppets and that these puppets should be consulted first. He maintains his right to veto Mikolajczyk and other Poles we may suggest and pretends that he has insufficient information about the names we have put forward long ago. Nothing is said about our proposal that the Commission should preside in an arbitral capacity over discussions among the Poles. Nothing on our point that measures in Poland affecting the future of the Polish State and action against individuals and groups likely to disturb the atmosphere should be avoided. He ignores his offer about observers and tells us to talk to the Warsaw puppets about this. It is as plain as a pikestaff that his tactics are to drag the business out while the Lublin Committee consolidate their power.'

Sir A. Clark Kerr's proposal to redraft M. Molotov's formula would merely sidetrack discussion. We had therefore instructed him to give up the attempt. If, however, we failed to get a satisfactory settlement for Poland and were defrauded by Russia, the Prime Minister would have to state the facts openly in the House of Commons. He had advised critics of the Yalta settlement to trust Stalin; the world would draw the deduction that such advice was wrong. This conclusion would be more certain because our failure in Poland would

'result in a set up there on the new Roumanian model. In other words Eastern Europe will be shown to be excluded from the terms of the declaration of Liberated Europe, and you and we shall be excluded from any jot of influence in that area. Surely we must not be manoeuvred into becoming parties to imposing on Poland, and on how much more of Eastern Europe, the Russian version of democracy.'

The alternative to an admission of failure was to stand by our interpretation of the Yalta declaration. Since it was useless to go on arguing with M. Molotov, the time had come for a joint message to Stalin. If we were rebuffed, the conclusion would be a sinister one, especially if we took into consideration other Russian actions. The message then referred to the news that M. Molotov would not attend the San Francisco Conference.¹ Did this withdrawal mean that the

¹ This announcement was made public on March 29. See Volume V, Chapter LXV, section (v).

(a) WM(45)36. (b) T347-8/5, Nos. 925-6 (Churchill Papers/356; N3404/6/55).

Russians were going to 'run out' or were they trying to blackmail us? The Dumbarton Oaks proposals, which were to form the basis of discussion at San Francisco, were based on the conception of the unity of the Great Powers. If no such unity existed in Poland, which was one of the major problems of the post-war settlement, what were the prospects of success of the New World Organisation? And was it not evident that, in the circumstances, we should be building the whole structure of world peace on foundations of sand? If the success of San Francisco were not to be gravely imperilled, we ought to make 'the strongest possible appeal to Stalin about Poland and if necessary about any other derogations from the harmony of the Crimea'.

The second part of the message contained suggestions for a telegram to Stalin putting the British and American case in the following terms:

'We are distressed that the work of the Polish Commission is held up because misunderstandings have arisen about the interpretation of the Yalta decisions. The agreed purpose of those decisions was that a new Government of National Unity was to be established after consultations with representatives of Lublin and other Democratic Poles which both our Governments could recognise. We have not got any reply on the various Polish names we have suggested, pleading lack of information. We have given him (Stalin) plenty of information. There ought not to be a veto by one Power on all nominations. We consider that our nominations for the discussions have been made in the spirit of confidence which befits Allies; and of course there could be no question of allowing Lublin to bar them. We will accept any nominations he puts forward, being equally confident that the Soviet Government will not suggest pro-Nazi or anti-Democratic Poles. The assembled Poles should then discuss the formation of a new Government among themselves. The Commission should preside as arbitrators to see fair play. M. Molotov wants the Lublinites to be consulted first. The communiqué does not provide for this. But we have no objection to his seeing them first. We cannot authorise our representatives to do so, since we think it contrary to the spirit of the communiqué. Also, to our surprise and regret M. Molotov, who suggested at an earlier stage that we might like to send observers, has now withdrawn the offer. Indeed, he appears to suggest it had never been made, and has suggested that we should apply to the present Warsaw administration. Stalin will understand that the whole point of the Yalta decision was to produce a Polish Government we could recognise and that we obviously cannot therefore deal with the present administration. We feel sure he will honour the offer to send observers and his influence with his Warsaw friends is so great that he will overcome with ease any reluctance they may show in agreeing.

2. Also, Stalin will surely see that while the three Great Allies are arranging for the establishment of the new Government of National

Unity, those in power in Poland should not prejudice the future. We have asked that the Soviet Government should use their influence with their friends in temporary power there. Stalin will, we feel confident, take steps to this end.

3. Stalin will find all this set out in most reasonable terms in our [Ambassadors'] communication of the 19th March. Will he cast his eye over it and judge whether our suggestions are not all in line with the spirit of the Yalta decision, and should they not all be met by our Ally in order that the aim of the Yalta settlement of Poland—viz. the setting up of a representative Government which Britain and the United States of America can recognise—may be carried out without further delay.'

- (a) Lord Halifax reported during the night of March 27–8 that the State Department still considered that our greatest chance of success was to put to M. Molotov a redraft of his four 'rules'. The President
(b) also held this view. He replied on March 29 to the Prime Minister that he fully realised the 'dangers inherent in the present course of events and not only for the immediate issues involved and our decisions at the Crimea but also for the San Francisco Conference and future world co-operation'. For this reason the President thought that we should 'base ourselves squarely on the Crimea decisions themselves and not allow any other considerations, no matter how important, to cloud the issue at this time'.

The President described the Yalta Agreement on Poland as a compromise between the Soviet proposal merely to enlarge the Lublin Government and our own proposal for a new Government. The wording of the agreement showed that we placed 'somewhat more emphasis' on the Lublin Poles than on the other two groups. This did not mean that we could allow the Lublin Poles a right to determine what Poles from the two other groups were to be consulted. We should insist upon our right to ensure that a truly representative group of Polish leaders was brought together for consultation. The procedure proposed by the Ambassadors, i.e. a redraft of M. Molotov's points, was the best practical way of getting what we wanted under this heading. The Ambassadors would make it clear, however, that we had not receded from the other requirements laid down in our note of March 19 and that we should revert to them at a later stage. Although the President wanted to allow the Ambassadors to go ahead without waiting for the joint message to Stalin, he agreed that the time had come for a message, and suggested a draft.¹

- (c) The Prime Minister replied on March 30 that we would accept

¹ Except for two additions (noted below) the draft was unchanged in the final text.

(a) N3348/6/55. (b) T363-4/5, Nos. 729-30 (Churchill Papers/356; N3576/6/55).
(c) T368/5, No. 928 (Churchill Papers/356; N3577/6/55).

wholeheartedly the President's draft message, although there were a few points in it which did not give full expression to our own views. The Prime Minister would also endorse the message in a parallel message of his own of which he would send the draft to the President. He suggested that the President might bring out more clearly in his message our refusal to enter into any arrangements with the Lublin Poles before the arrival of the other groups, and also that he should state more directly that we could not allow M. Molotov to exercise a veto on our candidates. The President might deal with this point by saying that no one of the three Powers should exercise a veto. The Prime Minister suggested that the President might mention the fact that M. Molotov himself had originally suggested the despatch of British and American observers. The Prime Minister then said that we would agree to the submission by the Ambassadors of a redraft of M. Molotov's proposals with the reservation that we had not receded from the other points in our notes of March 19 and would revert to them later.

The President replied on April 1 that he was making additions to (a) his draft to meet the Prime Minister's points. Meanwhile he had received a draft of the text of the Prime Minister's message. He agreed with this draft, and had therefore sent off his own message.

The final text of the President's draft was as follows:

'I cannot conceal from you the concern with which I view the development of events of mutual interest since our fruitful meeting at Yalta. The decisions we reached there were good ones and have for the most part been welcomed with enthusiasm by the peoples of the world who saw in our ability to find a common basis of understanding the best pledge for a secure and peaceful world after this war. Precisely because of the hopes and expectations that these decisions raised their fulfilment is being followed with the closest attention. We have no right to let them be disappointed. So far there has been a discouraging lack of progress made in the carrying out, which the world expects, of the political decisions which we reached at the Conference particularly those relating to the Polish question. I am frankly puzzled as to why this should be and must tell you that I do not fully understand in many respects the apparent indifferent attitude of your Government. Having understood each other so well at Yalta I am convinced that the three of us can and will clear away any obstacles which have developed since then. I intend, therefore, in this message to lay before you with complete frankness the problem as I see it.

Although I have in mind primarily the difficulties which the Polish negotiations have encountered, I must make a brief mention of our agreement embodied in the declaration on Liberated Europe. I frankly cannot understand why the recent developments in Roumania should

(a) T377/5, No. 732 (Churchill Papers/356; N3579/6/55).

be regarded as not falling within the terms of that agreement. I hope you will find time personally to examine the correspondence between our Governments on this subject.

However the part of our agreement at Yalta which has aroused the greatest popular interest and is the most urgent relates to the Polish question. You are aware of course that the Commission which we set up has made no progress. I feel this is due to the interpretation which your Government is placing upon the Crimean decisions. In order that there shall be no misunderstanding I set forth below my interpretation of the points of the agreement which are pertinent to the difficulties encountered by the Commission in Moscow.

In the discussions that have taken place so far your Government appears to take the position that the new Polish Provisional Government of National Unity which we agreed should be formed should be little more than a continuation of the present Warsaw Government. I cannot reconcile this either with our agreement or our discussions. While it is true that the Lublin Government is to be reorganized and its members play a prominent role it is to be done in such a fashion as to bring into being a new Government. This point is clearly brought out in several places in the text of the agreement. I must make it quite plain to you that any such solution which would result in a thinly disguised continuance of the present Warsaw régime would be unacceptable and would cause the people of the United States to regard the Yalta Agreement as having failed. It is equally apparent that for the same reason the Warsaw Government cannot under the agreement claim the right to select or reject what Poles are to be brought to Moscow by the Commission for consultation. Can we not agree that it is up to the Commission to select the Polish leaders to come to Moscow to consult in the first instance and invitations be sent out accordingly? If this could be done I see no great objection to having the Lublin group come first in order that they may be fully acquainted with the agreed interpretation of the Yalta decisions on this point. It is of course understood that if the Lublin group comes first no arrangements would be made independently with them before the arrival of the other Polish leaders called for consultation.¹ In order to facilitate the agreement the Commission might first of all select a small but representative group of Polish leaders who could suggest other names for the consideration of the Commission. We have not and would not bar or veto any candidate for consultation which M. Molotov might propose being confident that he would not suggest any Poles who would be inimical to the intent of the Crimean decision. I feel that it is not too much to ask that my Ambassador be accorded the same confidence and that any candidate for consultation presented by any one of the Commission be accepted by the others in good faith.² It is obvious to me that if the right of the Commission to select these Poles is limited or shared with the Warsaw Government

¹ This sentence was added in the final draft.

² The words 'and that any . . . good faith' were added in the final draft.

the very foundation on which our agreement rests would be destroyed. While the foregoing are the immediate obstacles which in my opinion have prevented the Commission from making any progress in this vital matter there are two other suggestions which were not in the agreement but nevertheless have a very important bearing on the result we all seek. Neither of these suggestions has been as yet accepted by your Government. I refer to:—

(1) That there should be the maximum of political tranquillity in Poland and that dissident groups should cease any measures and counter-measures against each other. That we should respectively use our influence to that end seems to me so eminently reasonable.

(2) It would also seem entirely natural in view of the responsibilities placed upon them by the agreement that representatives of the American and British members of the Commission should be permitted to visit Poland. As you will recall Mr. Molotov himself suggested this at an early meeting of the Commission and only subsequently withdrew it.¹ I wish I could convey to you how important it is for the successful development of our program of international collaboration that this Polish question be settled fairly and speedily. If this is not done all of the difficulties and dangers to Allied unity which we had so much in mind in reaching our decisions at the Crimea will face us in an even more acute form. You are, I am sure, aware that genuine popular support in the United States is required to carry out any Government policy, foreign or domestic. The American people make up their own mind and no Government action can change it. I mention this fact because the last sentence of your message about Mr. Molotov's attendance at San Francisco made me wonder whether you give full weight to this factor.'

The Prime Minister's message was as follows:

(a)

'You will by now I hope have received the message from the President of the United States which he was good enough to show to me before he sent it. It is now my duty on behalf of His Majesty's Government to assure you that the War Cabinet desire me to express to you our wholehearted endorsement of this message of the President's, and that we associate ourselves with it in its entirety.

There are two or three points which I desire specially to emphasize. First, that we do not consider we have retained in the Moscow discussions the spirit of Yalta nor indeed, at points, the letter. It was never imagined by us that the Commission we all three appointed with so much goodwill would not have been able to carry out their part swiftly and easily in a mood of give and take. We certainly thought that a Polish Government "new" and "re-organised" would by now have been in existence recognised by all the United Nations. This

¹ This sentence was added in the final draft.

(a) T379/5 (Churchill Papers/356; N3578/6/55).

would have afforded a proof to the world of our capacity and resolve to work together for its future. It is still not too late to achieve this.

However, even before forming such a new and re-organised Polish Government, it was agreed by the Commission that representative Poles should be summoned from inside Poland and from Poles abroad, not necessarily to take part in the Government, but merely for free and frank consultation. Even this preliminary step cannot be taken because of the claim put forward to veto any invitation, even to the consultation, of which the Soviet or the Lublin Government do not approve. We can never agree to such a veto by any one of us three. This veto reaches its supreme example in the case of Mikolajczyk, who is regarded throughout the British and American world as the outstanding Polish figure outside Poland.

We also have learned with surprise and regret that Molotov's spontaneous offer to allow observers or Missions to enter Poland has now been withdrawn. We are therefore deprived of all means of checking for ourselves the information, often of a most painful character, which is sent to us almost daily by the Polish Government in London. We do not understand why a veil of secrecy should thus be drawn over the Polish scene. We offer the fullest facilities to the Soviet Government to send Missions or individuals to visit any of the territories in our military occupation. In several cases this offer has been accepted by the Soviets and visits have taken place, to mutual satisfaction. We ask that the principle of reciprocity shall be observed in these matters, which would help to make so good a foundation for our enduring partnership.

The President has also shown me the messages which have passed between him and you about Molotov's inability to be present at the Conference at San Francisco. We had hoped the presence there of the three Foreign Ministers might have led to a clearance of many of the difficulties which have descended upon us in a storm since our happy and hopeful union at Yalta. We do not however question in any way the weight of the public reasons which make it necessary for him to remain in Russia.

Like the President, I too was struck with the concluding sentence of your message to him. What he says about the American people also applies to the British people and to the nations of the British Commonwealth with the addition that His Majesty's present advisers only hold office at the will of a universal suffrage Parliament. If our efforts to reach an agreement about Poland are to be doomed to failure, I shall be bound to confess the fact to Parliament when they return from the Easter Recess. No one has pleaded the cause of Russia with more fervour and conviction than I have tried to do. I was the first to raise my voice on June 22, 1941. It is more than a year since I proclaimed to a startled world the justice of the Curzon Line for Russia's western frontier, and this frontier has now been accepted by both the British Parliament and the President of the United States. It is as a sincere friend of Russia that I make my personal appeal to you and to your colleagues to come to a good understanding about Poland

with the Western Democracies and not to smite down the hands of comradeship in the future guidance of the world which we now extend.'

(iv)

The meeting of the Commission on April 2: Stalin's replies to the President and the Prime Minister: death of President Roosevelt: the Prime Minister's exchange of messages with President Truman: joint message from the Prime Minister and the President to Stalin: transfer of discussions to San Francisco (April 2-19, 1945).

The information received from Poland, though somewhat conflicting, continued to support the view that the Lublin Poles were unpopular in Poland, and unable to carry on a competent administration. The French Delegate to the Warsaw Government considered at the beginning of April that this Government was regarded throughout Poland as the agent of a foreign Power, and that, on a free vote, 90 per cent of the population would reject it. M. Mikolajczyk's name had lost nothing of its prestige, and would still have the support of the great majority of the peasants. The Warsaw Government had no experienced administrators; the lack of communications and control added to the chaos in the country. (a)

French reports also showed that the Warsaw Government had been disappointed to find how little support they received in western Poland. The population in this area was also alarmed at the behaviour of the Soviet troops. The situation was so very serious that a general rising would probably take place in the next few months against the Warsaw Government. Although the rising would be crushed, the Government and their Soviet backers were unlikely ever to win over a substantial section of Polish opinion. Even the Soviet Ambassador in Warsaw admitted that the personnel of the Government was second-rate. The officers of the new Polish army, from the rank of major, were Russians, and the troops were conscripts. They were kept mostly behind the lines, and very few of them were fighting the Germans.

Against this sombre background the Commission met again on April 2, but made no progress. M. Molotov refused to discuss the messages from the President and the Prime Minister on the ground that Stalin, to whom they were addressed, must be left to reply to them. He then objected that the Ambassadors' redraft¹ did not answer the essential question whether the British and American Governments agreed to take the Polish Provisional Government as a (b)

¹ See above, p. 510.

(a) N3581/6/55. (b) N3586, 4865/6/55.

basis of the new Government. M. Molotov claimed that the Crimea decision said nothing about summoning a 'representative group' of democratic leaders from Poland and abroad, and that the last sentence of paragraph (c) was not also covered by the Crimea decision and was in conflict with the Prime Minister's own statement that the Commission should work as a united body.

Sir A. Clark Kerr said that the redraft had been proposed only to meet M. Molotov's insistence on 'basic rules'. Such rules were not necessary under the terms of the agreement. It would be better to get down to the practical task of choosing the Poles. The Ambassadors pointed out that M. Molotov's proposal to invite only M. Grabski and one other Pole from London, and one from Poland (with a second nominated by the Lublin Poles) would discredit the Commission in the judgment of British and American opinion. The Ambassadors insisted upon the inclusion of M. Mikolajczyk. M. Molotov maintained his opposition to M. Mikolajczyk and his demand that the Provisional Government should be consulted about other nominations. The meeting therefore broke up without reaching a decision.

- (a) On April 10 the Soviet Ambassador in London delivered a reply¹ from Stalin to the Prime Minister's message. The reply was as follows:

'I have received your message of April 1 on the Polish question. In my message on this subject to the President, which I am also sending to you, I answer all the main questions connected with the work of the Moscow Commission on Poland. As regards the other questions which you raise in your message, I have the following remarks to make:

(1) The British and American Ambassadors who are members of the Moscow Commission are unwilling to take account of the Provisional Polish Government and insist on inviting Polish personalities for consultation, without regard to their attitude to the decisions of the Crimea Conference on Poland and to the Soviet Union. They absolutely insist on summoning to Moscow for consultation, for instance, Mikolajczyk, and this they do in the form of an ultimatum: in this they take no account of the fact that Mikolajczyk has come out openly against the decision of the Crimea Conference on Poland. However, if you think it necessary, I should be ready to use my influence with the Provisional Polish Government to make them withdraw their objections to inviting Mikolajczyk if the latter would make

¹ The reply was dated April 7. It should be noticed that this correspondence coincided in time with the very sharp American and British protests to Stalin over the latter's allegations about secret Anglo-American negotiations with the German High Command. See Volume V, Chapter LXVII, section (iii).

(a) T429/5 (Churchill Papers/356; N3904/6/55).

a public statement accepting the decisions of the Crimea Conference on the Polish question and declaring that he stands for the establishment of friendly relations between Poland and the Soviet Union.

(2) You wonder why the Polish theatre of military operations must be wrapped in mystery. In fact there is no mystery here. You ignore the fact that if British observers or other foreign observers were sent into Poland, the Poles would regard this as an insult to their national dignity, bearing in mind the fact, moreover, that the present attitude of the British Government to the Provisional Polish Government is regarded as unfriendly by the latter. So far as the Soviet Government is concerned, it cannot but take account of the negative attitude of the Provisional Government to the question of sending foreign observers into Poland. Further, you are aware that the Provisional Polish Government puts no obstacles in the way of entrance into Poland by representatives of other States which take up a different attitude towards it, and does not in any way obstruct them; this is the case, for instance, in regard to the representatives of the Czechoslovak Government, the Yugoslav Government and others.

(3) I had an agreeable conversation with Mrs. Churchill,¹ who made a great impression on me. She gave me a present from you. Allow me to express my heartfelt thanks for this present.'

M. Stalin's message to President Roosevelt was in the following terms:

'In connection with your message of April 1 I think it necessary to make the following observations on the question of Poland:

The Polish affair has, in fact, got into a blind alley. What is the reason?

The reason is that the Ambassadors of the U.S.A. and Great Britain in Moscow, who are members of the Moscow Commission, have departed from the presentation of the case by the Crimea Conference, and have introduced into the matter new elements which were not foreseen at the Crimea Conference. These are:

(a) At the Crimea Conference we all three regarded the Provisional Polish Government as the Government at present functioning in Poland, which, after undergoing reconstruction, should serve as the nucleus of the new Government of National Unity. Now the Ambassadors of the U.S.A. and Great Britain in Moscow abandon this presentation of the case, ignore the existence of the Provisional Polish Government, take no account of it, or at best equate single individuals from Poland and from London with the Provisional Government of Poland. Moreover, they consider that the reconstruction of the Provisional Government must be understood as its liquidation and the establishment of a completely new Government. Affairs have reached a point at which Mr. Harriman stated in the Moscow Commission: "It is possible that not one of the members of the Provisional Government will be included in the Polish Government of National Unity".

¹ Mrs. Churchill visited Moscow on behalf of the British 'Aid to Russia' fund.

Naturally such a presentation of the case by the American and British Ambassadors cannot but arouse indignation in the Polish Provisional Government. So far as the Soviet Union is concerned, it, of course, cannot agree to such a presentation of the case, since it amounts to an infraction of the decisions of the Crimea Conference.

(b) At the Crimea Conference we all three took as our starting point that some five persons should be summoned for consultation from Poland and some three from London, but no more. Now the Ambassadors of the U.S.A. and Great Britain in Moscow abandon this decision and demand that every member of the Moscow Commission should have the right to invite an unlimited number of persons from Poland and from London. Naturally the Soviet Government could not agree to this, since the summoning of persons should, in accordance with the decisions of the Crimea Conference, be a matter not for individual members of the Commission, but for the Commission as a whole, as a Commission. And the demand that an unlimited number of persons should be summoned for consultation goes against what was intended at the Crimea Conference.

(c) The Soviet Government takes as its starting point that in accordance with the sense of the decisions of the Crimea Conference such Polish personalities should be invited for consultation as, in the first place, accept the decisions of the Crimea Conference, including the decision on the Curzon Line, and, in the second place genuinely aim at the establishment of friendly relations between Poland and the Soviet Union. The Soviet Government insists on this, since much blood of Soviet soldiers has been shed for the liberation of Poland, and since in the course of the last 30 years the territory of Poland has twice been used by the enemy for an invasion of Russia: all this obliges the Soviet Government to aim at ensuring that relations between the Soviet Union and Poland should be friendly.

The Ambassadors of the U.S.A. and Great Britain in Moscow take no account of this fact, and aim at inviting Polish personalities for consultation without regard to their attitude towards the decisions of the Crimea Conference and towards the Soviet Union.

These, in my opinion, are the reasons which prevent a solution of the Polish question by way of mutual agreement.

To escape from the blind alley and arrive at an agreed decision, the following steps must, in my view, be taken:

- (1) To establish that the reconstruction of the Provisional Polish Government means not its liquidation but its reconstruction by way of broadening it: in this the nucleus of the future Polish Government of National Unity should be the Provisional Polish Government.
- (2) To return to the intention of the Crimea Conference and restrict ourselves to the summoning of eight Polish personalities, of which five should be summoned from Poland and three from London.
- (3) To establish that in all circumstances the representatives of the Provisional Polish Government should be consulted, and that this consultation with them should be carried out in the first instance, since the Provisional Polish Government is the greater power in

Poland in comparison with those single individuals to be summoned from London and from Poland, whose influence on the population of Poland cannot in any way be compared with the enormous influence which the Provisional Polish Government enjoys in Poland.

I draw your attention to this point, since, in my opinion, any other decision on this point might be taken in Poland as an insult to the Polish people and as an attempt to impose on Poland a Government which has been set up without taking into account the public opinion of Poland.

(4) To summon for consultation from Poland and from London only such personalities as accept the decision of the Crimea Conference on Poland and genuinely aim at establishing friendly relations between Poland and the Soviet Union.

(5) To carry out the reconstruction of the Polish Provisional Government by means of replacing some of the present Ministers of the Provisional Government by new Ministers from the ranks of Polish personalities who have not participated in the Provisional Government.

As for the numerical relation between the old and new Ministers in the Polish Government of National Unity, here we might establish approximately the same relation as was realised in the Government of Yugoslavia.¹

I think that if the above observations are taken into account, an agreed decision on the Polish question could be arrived at in a short time.'

The Prime Minister thought that M. Mikolajczyk should make the (a) declaration which Stalin required, and that Mr. Eden should invite him to do so. M. Mikolajczyk on his part agreed to the suggestion and issued on April 15 a statement that he accepted the Crimea decision (b) 'in regard to the future of Poland, its sovereign, independent position, and the formation of a Provisional Government representative of National Unity', and that he considered 'close and lasting friendship with Russia' as 'the keystone of future Polish policy, within the wider friendship of the United Nations'.²

Sir A. Clark Kerr considered that Stalin's replies suggested that (c) he did not want to break with Great Britain or the United States over the Polish question. Sir A. Clark Kerr therefore advised that we should stand firm on our interpretation of the Yalta decision as set out in the notes of March 19 and messages of April 1. Any sign of weakness on our part would destroy the chances of progress. At this

¹ See above, p. 352.

² Stalin was still not satisfied that M. Mikolajczyk accepted the decisions of the Yalta Conference with regard to the eastern frontier of Poland. The Prime Minister therefore (d) sent to Stalin on April 22 a public statement by M. Mikolajczyk in which he said that the (e) Poles ought to give way to the Russian demand for the Curzon line (including Lwow).

(a) N4057/6/55. (b) N4095. 4457. 4769. 4224/6/55. (c) N4050 6 55. (d) T513/5, Churchill Papers/356. (e) T582, Churchill Papers/356; Tel. 2007 to Moscow, Prisc.

point, however, the death of President Roosevelt affected the situation. The Soviet Government had relied on the President to keep in check the sections of American opinion which were most critical of Soviet policy. They could not be sure whether President Truman would be able to resist this criticism. Hence they thought it necessary to take up a more conciliatory line. Stalin accepted Mr. Harriman's advice, in spite of the previous announcement to the contrary, that M. Molotov should go to the United States in order to make contact with the new President, and to represent the U.S.S.R. at the San Francisco Conference. Mr. Harriman and Sir A. Clark Kerr were instructed to leave for the United States after M. Molotov had left on April 17, in order to ensure that the three members of the Moscow Commission were available for consultation. Mr. Eden had already

(a) left for Washington when President Truman, on April 14, sent to the Prime Minister a draft message to Stalin. President Truman proposed that the Prime Minister should also sign the message. The draft was in the following terms:

'We are sending this joint reply to your messages of April 7 in regard to Polish negotiations for the sake of greater clarity and in order that there will be no misunderstanding as to our position on this matter. The British and United States Governments have tried most earnestly to be constructive and fair in their approach and will continue to do so. Before putting before you the concrete and constructive suggestion which is the purpose of this message we feel it necessary, however, to correct the completely erroneous impression which you have apparently received in regard to the position of the British and United States Governments as set forth by our Ambassadors under direct instructions during the negotiations. It is most surprising to have you state that the present Government functioning in Warsaw has been in any way ignored during these negotiations. Such has never been our intention nor our position. You must be cognizant of the fact that our Ambassadors in Moscow have agreed without question that the three leaders of the Warsaw Government should be included in the list of Poles to be invited to come to Moscow for consultation with the Commission. We have never denied that among the three elements from which the new Provisional Government of National Unity is to be formed the representatives of the present Warsaw Government will play, unquestionably, a prominent part. Nor can it be said with any justification that our Ambassadors are demanding the right to invite an unlimited number of Poles. The right to put forward and have accepted by the Commission individual representative Poles from abroad and from within Poland to be invited to Moscow for consultation cannot be interpreted in that sense. Indeed in his message of April 1 President Roosevelt specifically said: "In order to facilitate the agreement the Commission

(a) T470/5, No. 2 (Churchill Papers/356; N4081/6/55).

might first of all select a small but representative group of Polish leaders who could suggest other names for consideration by the Commission." The real issue between us is whether or not the Warsaw Government has the right to veto individual candidates for consultation. No such interpretation in our considered opinion can be found in the Crimea decision. It appears to us that you are reverting to the original position taken by the Soviet Delegation at the Crimea which was subsequently modified in the agreement. Let us keep clearly in mind that we are now speaking only of the group of Poles who are to be invited to Moscow for consultation. With reference to the statement which you attribute to Ambassador Harriman it would appear that real misunderstanding has occurred since from his reports to his Government the remark in question would appear to refer to the Polish Government in London and not as you maintain to the Provisional Government in Warsaw.

You mention the desirability of inviting eight Poles—five from within Poland and three from London—to take part in these first consultations and in your message to the Prime Minister you indicate that Mikolajczyk would be acceptable if he issued a statement in support of the Crimean decision. We, therefore, submit the following proposals for your consideration in order to prevent a breakdown with all its incalculable consequences of our endeavours to settle the Polish question. We hope that you will give them your most careful and earnest consideration.

(1) That we instruct our representative on the Commission to extend immediately invitations to the following Polish leaders to come to Moscow to consult: Bierut, Osobka-Morawski, Rola-Zymerski, Bishop Sapieha, one representative Polish leader not connected with the present Warsaw Government to be proposed by you, and from London, Mikolajczyk, Grabski, and Stanczyk.

(2) That once the invitations to come for consultation have been issued by the Commission the representatives of Warsaw could arrive first if desired.

(3) That it be agreed that these Polish leaders called for consultation could suggest to the Commission the names of a certain number of other Polish leaders from within Poland or abroad who might be brought in for consultation in order that all major Polish groups be represented in the discussions.

(4) We do not feel that we could commit ourselves to any formula for determining the composition of the new Government of National Unity in advance of consultation with the Polish leaders and we do not in any case consider the Yugoslav precedent to be applicable to Poland.

We ask you to read again carefully the American and British messages of April 1 since they set forth the larger considerations which we still have very much in mind and to which we must adhere.'

The Prime Minister telegraphed to Mr. Eden on the night of (a)

(a) T473/5 (Churchill Papers/356; N4082/6/55).

April 14–15 that he thought it desirable to accept President Truman's draft, and to do so as soon as possible. If necessary, he would postpone the debate in the House of Commons, though he would make it clear that the change in the Presidency did not affect the agreement between the two Governments on their policy with regard to Poland. The Prime Minister considered immediate agreement on President Truman's proposals to be of the highest importance. He had been wanting a lead from the United States; the lead had now come, and he was in general agreement with it.

- (a) The Foreign Office considered that President Truman's message, though on the right lines, was not sufficient to meet the situation since, even if Stalin accepted it, it would get over only the immediate difficulty of starting the consultations in Moscow. It was therefore desirable to suggest to President Truman that he should include a reference to the fact that the Prime Minister would have to make a statement in the House of Commons on April 19. President Truman rejected the Russian claim that the Lublin Poles should be allowed to veto candidates for consultation. Stalin, however, had proposed that the Lublin Poles should have a prior right of consultation throughout the discussions. The relevant sentence in President Truman's message should therefore be amended to read: 'The real issue between us is whether or not the Warsaw Government has the right to prior consultation in all circumstances.' President Truman's reference to M. Mikolajczyk was not accurate and might irritate Stalin who had merely promised to try to overcome the opposition to M. Mikolajczyk. The sentence might be redrafted to read '... you indicate that you will do your best to arrange that Mikolajczyk will be accepted, if... '.

President Truman had also proposed that invitations should be sent to three Lublin representatives, Archbishop Sapieha, and one Pole, not connected with the Warsaw Government, who was to be proposed by the Russians. This plan would mean that no representative from inside Poland of any of the four political parties would be invited to Moscow. President Truman indeed had suggested that the Poles first invited could put forward other names, but we could not be sure that the Russians or the Lublin Poles would accept these names. In view of the reports of Russian consultations with fifteen Polish leaders,¹ we might put forward the four recognised party leaders who were included among these fifteen names.

- (b) The Prime Minister agreed that Sir A. Cadogan should telegraph these suggestions to Mr. Eden; he sent a message, however, at the

¹ See below, p. 540.

(a) N4091, 4176/6/55. (b) N4091/6/55.

same time to Mr. Eden that we ought not to lose the advantage (a) of a joint message for the sake of these proposed amendments.

Meanwhile Mr. Eden himself had telegraphed to the Prime (b) Minister that we should not accept the President's proposal to allow the Russians to choose the only non-Lublin Pole other than Archbishop Sapieha. Mr. Eden said that he would put this point to Mr. (c) Stettinius. The State Department agreed with Mr. Eden that it would be unwise to modify the text of proposal (1) in the penultimate paragraph of the text of the message in such a way as to include the names of four political leaders from among whom, if the Russians agreed, one non-Lublin Pole (other than the Archbishop) from Poland was to be chosen. Sir A. Clark Kerr and Mr. Harriman, on receiving the text of the message, had also telegraphed their view that (d) it would be a mistake to suggest any concession from the line we had hitherto taken that the non-Lublin Poles should be a representative group. On April 17, after the two Ambassadors had left Moscow for the United States, Mr. Roberts, as Chargé d'Affaires, telegraphed, with the consent of the United States Chargé d'Affaires, that he was holding up the message in case the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden should wish to consider the recommendations made by Sir A. Clark Kerr and Mr. Harriman. Mr. Roberts repeated the Ambassador's views about insisting upon a representative group of non-Lublin Poles, and avoiding any sign of weakness on the Anglo-American side. This latter consideration was even more important in view of the facts that the Soviet Government had now stated their intention of concluding a treaty with the Polish Provisional Government and had announced in the Soviet Press that, in spite of British and American opposition, they would insist upon the representation of the Provisional Government at the San Francisco Conference.

The Foreign Office considered that Mr. Roberts's argument was sound and that in the altered circumstances, i.e. the transfer of the discussions to the United States, M. Molotov's attendance at the San Francisco Conference, and the facts mentioned by Mr. Roberts, it would be better not to deliver the message or to make any concessions before a meeting with M. Molotov in Washington. The Prime (e) Minister, however, gave instructions that the message should be delivered.

The message as communicated on April 18 was in the terms of the (f) draft, with the omission of the last two sentences of the first paragraph and the inclusion in proposal (1) of the names of the four

(a) T479/5 (Churchill Papers/356; N4091/6/55). (b) T481/5 (Churchill Papers/356; N4083/6/55). (c) N4177/6/55. (d) N4181, 4220/6/55. (e) N4220/6/55. (f) T490A/5 (Churchill Papers/356; N4384/6/55).

non-Lublin Poles from Poland (leaving Stalin to choose one of the four).¹

- (a) The announcement that the Soviet Government intended to conclude a treaty with the Polish Provisional Government had been made to Sir A. Clark Kerr by M. Vyshinsky in the afternoon of April 16. Sir A. Clark Kerr said to M. Vyshinsky that, while we were unlikely to object in principle to a treaty between two neighbouring countries, we should regret that the Soviet Government had not waited for the formation of the new Polish Government. M. Vyshinsky claimed that the Soviet Government were acting under pressure of public opinion in the two countries.

- The Foreign Office indeed regarded the conclusion of any such treaty with the Polish Provisional Government as totally at variance with the spirit of the Yalta declaration which also carried the clear implication that the three Governments would deal jointly with the Polish question. Mr. Eden, with the support of Mr. Stettinius, put (b) the case to M. Molotov at Washington but, as usual, M. Molotov refused to be moved by any argument.

(v)

Discussions with M. Molotov at Washington: Stalin's message of April 25 to the Prime Minister: the Prime Minister's reply of April 28: American proposals for ending the deadlock: unsuccessful meetings with M. Molotov at San Francisco (April 21–May 4, 1945).

- (c) On April 21 Mr. Eden discussed the deadlock over the Polish question with Sir A. Clark Kerr and Mr. Harriman in Washington. The two Ambassadors considered that we should stand firmly on the proposals in the joint message of April 18 to Stalin, and that any important concession would make the task of actual negotiation in Moscow an impossible one. Mr. Eden found that the President and the State Department were inclined to postpone talks with M. Molotov until the latter was in San Francisco. Mr. Eden, however, said that it was essential to have at least a day in Washington in which the Polish question could be discussed, with the President's support, before moving to San Francisco.
- (d) The Americans accepted Mr. Eden's view, and the President said that, as soon as M. Molotov arrived, he would tell him 'in words of

¹ The text ran: 'That we instruct our representatives on the Commission to extend immediate invitations to the following Polish leaders to come to Moscow to consult: Bierut, Osobka-Morawski, Rola-Zymierski; Archbishop Sapieha; one representative Polish political party leader not connected with the present Warsaw Government (if any of the following were agreeable to you, he would be agreeable to us: Witos, Zulawski, Chacinski, Jasiukowicz); and from London Mikolajczyk, Grabski, and Stanczyk.'

(a) N4104/35/55; N4413/6/55. (b) N4507, 4497/6/55. (c) N4495/6/55.
(d) N4549/6/55.

one syllable' the importance which he attached to the discussion of the Polish question by the three Foreign Secretaries in Washington before they left for San Francisco. No progress, however, was made towards a settlement. Mr. Eden and Mr. Stettinius met M. Molotov (a) on the evening of April 22 and twice on April 23. Between the two meetings on April 23 President Truman saw M. Molotov. The President said in strong terms that the United States and Great Britain had fulfilled all their obligations to Russia, whereas the Russians were not carrying out the Yalta agreement on Poland. He told M. Molotov that the proposals in the joint message of April 18 to Stalin were fair and reasonable, and went as far as we could go to meet the requirements expressed in Stalin's message of April 7. The United States Government could not be a party to the formation of a Polish Government which was not representative of all Polish democratic elements. They were deeply disappointed at the failure of the Soviet Government to consult a representative group of Poles other than officials of the Warsaw régime. The United States were determined to continue with other members of the United Nations in their plans for a World Organisation, but the failure of the three principal Allies to reach a just solution of the Polish problem would cast serious doubts upon their unity of purpose in regard to post-war collaboration. The President therefore gave M. Molotov a message for Stalin requesting that the Soviet Government should accept the proposals in the joint message of April 18, and that M. Molotov should continue conversations on this basis with Mr. Eden and Mr. Stettinius at San Francisco.

The alternative to the continuation of the conversations at San Francisco would have been a postponement of the San Francisco Conference for a few days until the Russians—that is to say, M. Molotov in Washington—had agreed to accept the proposals for carrying out the Yalta decisions. Mr. Eden was prepared at first to (b) take this alternative on the ground that there was no other way of bringing home to the Soviet Government the seriousness of the situation, and that it would be impossible at San Francisco to talk of three-Power unity and to propose the voting compromise¹ (which implied collaboration) in the face of the Russian attitude which showed that the Soviet Government had no intention of working in a spirit of collaboration as far as Poland was concerned. Mr. Eden, however, decided after further consultation with the Americans (c)

¹ See Volume V, Chapter. LXV.

(a) N4493, 4497, 4507, 4509, 4511, 4512, 4545, 4552/6/55. (b) T598/5 (Churchill Papers/356; N4498/6/55). (c) T609/5 (Churchill Papers/356; N4511/6/55).

- that it would be better to agree to their plan. The Prime Minister, in
- (a) a telegram to Mr. Eden on April 24, approved of his decision to accept this plan rather than to postpone the Conference. The Prime
 - (b) Minister informed the War Cabinet on April 24 of the discussions in Washington and of President Truman's statement to M. Molotov for communication to Stalin. With the approval of the War Cabinet the
 - (c) Prime Minister sent a message to Stalin on the night of April 24-5 that he and his colleagues fully supported the President's statement, and that he earnestly hoped that means would be found 'to compose these serious difficulties' which, if they continued, would 'darken the hour of victory'.
- (d) On April 25 the Soviet Ambassador sent to the Foreign Office a message from Stalin to the Prime Minister in the following terms:

'I have received the joint message from yourself and Mr. President Truman of the 18th April.

From this message it is evident that you continue to consider the Provisional Polish Government, not as the nucleus of a future Polish Government of National Unity but simply as one of several groups equivalent to any other group of Poles. It is difficult to reconcile such an understanding of the position of the Provisional Polish Government and such an attitude towards it with the decision of the Crimea Conference on Poland. At the Crimea Conference all three of us, including President Roosevelt, proceeded on the assumption that the Provisional Polish Government, functioning now, as it does, in Poland and enjoying the confidence and support of the majority of the Polish people, should be the nucleus, that is to say the principal part of a new reorganised Government of National Unity.

You, evidently, are not in agreement with such an understanding of the question. In declining to accept the Yugoslav precedent as a model for Poland you confirm that the Provisional Polish Government cannot be considered as a basis and nucleus of a future Government of National Unity.

The fact that Poland has a common frontier with the Soviet Union must also be taken into account. This cannot be said of Great Britain or the United States of America.

The question of Poland is for the security of the Soviet Union what the question of Belgium and Greece is for the security of Great Britain.

You, evidently, do not agree that the Soviet Union has the right to aim at the existence in Poland of a Government friendly towards the Soviet Union and that the Soviet Government cannot consent to the existence in Poland of a Government hostile to it. To this we are pledged, apart from all else, by the blood of Soviet people which has

(a) T616/5 (Churchill Papers/356; N4511/6/55). (b) WM(45)50, C.A.; N4715/6/55.
 (c) T624/5 (Churchill Papers/356; N4493/6/55). (d) T634/5 (Churchill Papers/356; N4694/6/55).

been profusely shed on the fields of Poland in the name of the liberation of Poland. I do not know whether a truly representative Government has been set up in Greece or whether the Government in Belgium is truly democratic. The Soviet Union was not asked when these Governments were set up there. Nor did the Soviet Government claim the right to interfere in these matters as it understands the full significance of Belgium and Greece for the security of Great Britain.

It is incomprehensible why the interests of the Soviet Union cannot also be considered from the point of view of security in discussing the question of Poland.

It must be acknowledged that the conditions are unusual in which two Governments—the United States and Great Britain—come to an arrangement together beforehand on the question of Poland, where the U.S.S.R. is concerned above all, and put the Government of the U.S.S.R. in an intolerable position by attempting to dictate their demands to it.

It must be said that such a situation cannot react favourably on the agreed solution of the question of Poland.

I am extremely grateful to you for your kindness in communicating to me the text of Mikolajczyk's statement regarding the eastern frontiers of Poland. I am prepared to recommend to the Provisional Polish Government that they should take into consideration this statement of Mikolajczyk and withdraw their objections against inviting Mikolajczyk for consultation on the question of a Polish Government.

All that is required now is that the Yugoslav precedent should be recognised as a model for Poland. It seems to me that, if this is recognised, progress can be made with the question of Poland.'

The reference to the 'Yugoslav precedent' in Stalin's message was the more discouraging because Mr. Eden had already argued at (a) length with M. Molotov at Washington that this precedent did not apply. In the case of Yugoslavia the three Powers had merely accepted an agreement already reached by the Yugoslavs themselves. Furthermore, it was impossible, in advance of consultations among the Poles, to suggest that the numerical relationship between existing and new Ministers in a new Polish Government should be the same as in Yugoslavia (i.e. five to one in favour of the members of the Warsaw Provisional Government).

The Prime Minister decided to reply at once to this point and to the other arguments in Stalin's message. He sent a draft of his reply to the Foreign Office on April 26. The draft was returned to him with (b) a few suggested changes on April 27, and despatched to Moscow on the night of April 28–9. The Prime Minister informed President (c) Truman of his reply. He said that he did not know whether Stalin had

(a) N4512/6/55. (b) N4800/6/55. (c) T673/5, No. 20 (Churchill Papers/356; N4800/6/55).

also sent a message to the President but that in any case he (the Prime Minister) hoped that the President would agree to his decision to reply with a statement of the 'specifically British case'. He added that he would be very glad if the President would support his statement by a message on similar lines.

(a) The Prime Minister's statement was as follows:

'I thank you for your message of April 24. I have been much distressed at the misunderstanding that has grown up between us on the Crimean Agreement about Poland. I certainly went to Yalta with the hope that both the London and Lublin Polish Governments would be swept away and that a new Government would be formed from among Poles of goodwill, among whom the members of M. Bierut's Government would be prominent. But you did not like this plan, and we and the Americans agreed therefore that there was to be no sweeping away of the Bierut Government but that instead it should become a "new" Government "reorganised on a broader democratic basis with the inclusion of democratic leaders from Poland itself and from Poles abroad". For this purpose M. Molotov and the two Ambassadors were to sit together in Moscow and try to bring into being such a government by consultations with members of the present Provisional Government and with other Polish democratic leaders from within Poland and from abroad.

The Commission then would have to set to work to select the Poles who were to come for consultations. We tried in each case to find representative men, and in this we were careful to exclude what we thought were extreme people unfriendly to Russia. We did not select for our list anyone at present in the London Polish Government, but three good men, namely Mikolajczyk, Stanczyk and Grabski, who went into opposition to the London Polish Government because they did not like its attitude towards Russia, and in particular its refusal to accept the eastern frontiers which you and I agreed upon, now so long ago, and which I was the first man outside the Soviet Government to proclaim to the world as just and fair, together with the compensations, etc. in the west and north. It is true that Mikolajczyk at that time still hoped for Lwow, but as you know he has now publicly abandoned that claim.

Our names, for those from inside and outside Poland, were put forward in the same spirit of helpfulness by the Americans and ourselves. The first thing the British complain of is that after nine weeks of discussion on the Commission at Moscow, and any amount of telegrams between our three Governments not the least progress has been made because M. Molotov has steadily refused in the Commission to give an opinion about the Poles we have mentioned so that not one of them has been allowed to come even to a preliminary round-table discussion. Please observe that these names were put forward not as necessarily to be members of a new and reorganised

(a) T675/5 (Churchill Papers/356; N4800/6/55).

Polish Government but simply to come for the round-table talk provided for in the Crimean Declaration out of which it was intended to bring about the formation of a united Provisional Government, representative of the main elements of Polish life and prepared to work on friendly terms with the Soviet Government, and also of a kind which we and all the world could recognise. That was and still is our desire. This Provisional Government was then, according to our joint decision at the Crimea, to pledge itself to hold "free and unfettered elections as soon as possible on the basis of universal suffrage and secret ballot", in which "all democratic and anti-Nazi Parties shall have the right to take part and put forward candidates." Alas, none of this has been allowed to move forward.

In your paragraph 1 you speak of accepting "the Yugoslav precedent as a model for Poland". You have always wished that our private and personal series of telegrams should be frank and outspoken. I must say at once that the two cases are completely different. In the case of Poland, the Three Powers reached agreement about how we should arrange for the emergence of a new Government. This was to be by means of consultations before our Commission between representatives of the Bierut Government and democratic Polish leaders from inside and outside Poland. In the case of Yugoslavia, there was nothing of this kind. You seem now to be proposing, after your representative on the Moscow Poland Commission has made it impossible to start the conversations provided for in our Agreement, that the agreed procedure should be abandoned. Thus we British feel that after all this time absolutely no headway has been made towards forming the "new" and "reorganised" Polish Government, while on the contrary the Soviet Government have made a twenty-years' treaty with the present Provisional Polish Government under M. Bierut although it remains neither new nor reorganised. We have the feeling that it is we who have been dictated to and brought up against a stone wall upon matters which we sincerely believed were settled in a spirit of friendly comradeship in the Crimea.

I must also say that the way things have worked out in Yugoslavia certainly does not give me the feeling of a fifty-fifty interest and influence as between our two countries. Marshal Tito has become a complete dictator. He has proclaimed that his prime loyalties are to Soviet Russia. Although he allowed the members of the Royal Yugoslav Government to enter his Government, they only number six as against twenty-five of his own nominees. We have the impression that they are not taken into consultation on matters of high policy and that it is becoming a one-party regime. However I have not made any complaint or comment about all this, and both at Yalta and at other times have acquiesced in the settlement which has been reached in Yugoslavia. I do not complain of any action you have taken there in spite of my misgivings and I hope it will all work out smoothly and make the Yugoslavs a prosperous and free people, friendly to both Russia and ourselves.

We could not, however, accept the "Yugoslav model" as a guide to

what should happen in Poland. Neither we nor the Americans have any military or special interest in Poland. All we seek in material things is to be treated in the regular way between friendly States. Here we are all shocked that you should think that we would favour a Polish Government hostile to the Soviet Union. This is the opposite of our policy. But it was on account of Poland that the British went to war with Germany in 1939. We saw in the Nazi treatment of Poland a symbol of Hitler's vile and wicked lust of conquest and subjugation, and his invasion of Poland was the spark that fired the mine. The British people do not, as is sometimes thought, go to war for calculation but for sentiment. They had a feeling which grew up in years that with all Hitler's encroachments and doctrine he was a danger to our country and to the liberties which we prize in Europe, and when after Munich he broke his word so shamefully about Czechoslovakia, even the extremely peace-loving Chamberlain gave our guarantee against Hitler to Poland. When that guarantee was invoked by the German invasion of Poland, the whole nation went to war with Hitler, unprepared as we were. There was a flame in the hearts of men like that which swept your people in their noble defence of their country from a treacherous, brutal and, as at one time it almost seemed, overwhelming German attack. This British flame burns still among all classes and Parties in this Island, and in its self-governing Dominions, and they can never feel this war will have ended rightly unless Poland has a fair deal in the full sense of sovereignty, independence and freedom on the basis of friendship with Russia. It was on this that I thought we had agreed at Yalta.

Side by side with this strong sentiment for the rights of Poland, which I believe is shared in at least as strong a degree throughout the United States, there has grown up throughout the English-speaking world a very warm and deep desire to be friends on equal and honourable terms with the mighty Russian Soviet Republic and to work with you, making allowances for our different systems of thought and government, in long and bright years for all the world which we three Powers alone can make together. I, who for my many years of great responsibility have worked faithfully for this unity, will certainly continue to do so by every means in my power, and in particular I can assure you that we in Great Britain would not work for or tolerate a Polish Government unfriendly to Russia. Neither could we recognise a Polish Government that did not truly correspond to the description in our joint Declaration at Yalta with proper regard for the rights of the individual as we understand these matters in the Western world.

With regard to your reference to Greece and Belgium, I recognise the consideration which you gave me when we had to intervene with heavy armed Forces to quell the E.A.M.—E.L.A.S. attack upon the centre of Government in Athens. We have given repeated instructions that your interest in Roumania and Bulgaria is to be recognised as predominant. We cannot however be excluded altogether, and we dislike being treated by your subordinates in these countries so

differently from the kindly manner in which we at the top are always treated by you. In Greece we seek nothing but her friendship, which is of long duration, and desire only her independence and integrity. But we have no intention to try to decide whether she is to be a monarchy or a republic. Our only policy there is to restore matters to the normal as quickly as possible and to hold fair and free elections, I hope within the next four or five months. These elections will decide the régime and later on the constitution. The will of the people, expressed under conditions of freedom and universal franchise, must prevail; that is our root principle. If the Greeks were to decide for a Republic, it would not affect our relations with them. We will use our influence with the Greek Government to invite Russian representatives to come and see freely what is going on in Greece, and at the election I hope that there will be Russian, American and British Commissioners at large in the country to make sure that there is no intimidation or other frustration of the free choice of the people between the different Parties who will be contending. After that our work in Greece may well be done.

As to Belgium, we have no conditions to demand though naturally we should get disturbed if they started putting up V-weapons etc. pointed at us, and we hope they will, under whatever form of Government they adopt by popular decision, come into a general system of resistance to prevent Germany striking westward. Belgium, like Poland, is a theatre of war and corridor of communication, and everyone must recognise the force of these considerations without which great armies cannot operate.

As to your paragraph 3, it is quite true that about Poland we have reached a definite line of action with the Americans. This is because we agree naturally upon the subject, and both sincerely feel that we have been rather ill-treated about the way the matter has been handled since the Crimea Conference. No doubt these things seem different when looked at from the opposite point of view. But we are absolutely agreed that the pledge we have given for a sovereign, free, independent Poland with a Government fully and adequately representing all the democratic elements among Poles, is for us a matter of honour and duty. I do not think there is the slightest chance of any change in the attitude of our two Powers, and when we are agreed we are bound to say so. After all, we have joined with you, largely on my original initiative early in 1944, in proclaiming the Polish-Russian frontier which you desired, namely, the Curzon Line including Lwow for Russia. We think you ought to meet us with regard to the other half of the policy which you equally with us have proclaimed, namely, the sovereignty, independence and freedom of Poland, provided it is a Poland friendly to Russia. Therefore His Majesty's Government cannot accept a Government on the Yugoslav precedent in which there would be four representatives of the present Warsaw Provisional Government to every one representing the other democratic elements. There ought to be a proper balance and a proper distribution of the important posts in the Government; and this result should be

reached as we agreed at the Crimea by discussing the matter with true representatives of all the different Polish elements which are not fundamentally anti-Russian.

Also, difficulties arise at the present moment because all sorts of stories are brought out of Poland which are eagerly listened to by many Members of Parliament and which at any time may be violently raised in Parliament or Press in spite of my deprecating such action, and on which M. Molotov will vouchsafe us no information at all in spite of repeated requests. For instance, there is the talk of the fifteen Poles who were said to have met the Russian authorities for discussion over four weeks ago,¹ and of M. Witos about whom there has been a similar but more recent report;² and there are many other statements of deportations etc. How can I contradict such complaints when you give me no information whatever and when neither I nor the Americans are allowed to send anyone into Poland to find out for themselves the true state of affairs? There is no part of our occupied or liberated territory into which you are not free to send delegations, and people do not see why you should have any reasons against similar visits by British delegations to foreign countries liberated by you.

There is not much comfort in looking into a future where you and the countries you dominate, plus the Communist Parties in many other States, are all drawn up on one side, and those who rally to the English-speaking nations and their associates or Dominions are on the other. It is quite obvious that their quarrel would tear the world to pieces and that all of us leading men on either side who had anything to do with that would be shamed before history. Even embarking on a long period of suspicions, of abuse and counter-abuse and of opposing policies would be a disaster hampering the great developments of world prosperity for the masses which are attainable only by our trinity. I hope there is no word or phrase in this out-pouring of my heart to you which unwittingly gives offence. If so, let me know. But do not I beg you, my friend Stalin, underrate the divergencies which are opening about matters which you may think are small to us but which are symbolic of the way the English-speaking democracies look at life.'

- (a) Mr. Eden telegraphed to the Prime Minister on the night of May 1-2 that he would use to M. Molotov the arguments in the message to Stalin, but that he did not expect to make much progress. Mr. Stettinius and Mr. Harriman were also much pleased with the message; they had not heard whether the President had sent a message of his own to Stalin in support of the Prime Minister. They were now considering what should be done if the Prime Minister's message failed to move Stalin. Mr. Eden telegraphed the plan which

¹ See Section (vi) of this Chapter.

² See p. 542, note 1.

(a) T724/5, T729/5 (Churchill Papers/356; N4854/6/55).

they were submitting to the President. The plan was drafted as follows:

'The attitude adopted by M. Molotov on the Polish question in Washington and San Francisco suggests that no progress is likely to be made except through a concerted approach to Marshal Stalin. From the latter's messages of April 24 to the Prime Minister and to President Truman it appears that the Russians fear that if a genuinely representative gathering of Poles were to be called together with full freedom to consult among themselves about the formation of a new Government in Poland, the resulting Government might not be one upon whose unqualified friendship the Soviet Government could rely. They accordingly wish to see the scope of the consultations circumscribed in advance and to impose conditions which would ensure that the changes to be made in the present completely docile Warsaw administration should be as small as possible.

His Majesty's Government and the United States Government cannot agree to any derogation from the Crimea decisions, nor can they accept in advance and impose upon the Poles Marshal Stalin's condition that the numerical relationship between the opposing groups in the new Yugoslav Government should be applied to the new Polish Provisional Government of National Unity. We are in any case handicapped by lack of precise knowledge of what share of representation in the new Government M. Mikolajczyk would regard as indispensable. It seems unlikely that at the present state it would be possible to secure more than one third share for non-Warsaw Government elements.

It might be possible to break the present deadlock by suggesting, with a view to meeting their principal preoccupation while adhering to the Crimea decisions, that the two stages of (a) consultation and (b) formation of a new Government agreed upon at the Crimea should to some extent be merged in accordance with the following procedure.

(a) In San Francisco. Mr. Stettinius and Mr. Eden should tell M. Molotov that they cannot regard Marshal Stalin's message of April 24 as marking any advance upon the position taken up by M. Molotov in Washington. They greatly regret that in the circumstances they have been forced to the conclusion that no useful purpose would be served by continuing their discussions with M. Molotov. The situation created by the Soviet Government's failure to respond to the proposals made in the joint message from the President and the Prime Minister to Marshal Stalin of April 18 and by their conclusion of a long-term treaty of mutual assistance with the present unreorganised Warsaw administration is so serious that they must now refer the matter to their Governments for a decision as to the next steps. Mr. Harriman and Sir A. Clark Kerr would shortly be returning to Moscow and would be in a position on their return to communicate to Marshal Stalin the final views of the two Governments.

M. Molotov would also be pressed again for information about the whereabouts of the fifteen Poles from inside Poland who are reported

to have accepted an invitation from the Soviet Military authorities to enter into consultation, and of M. Witos who was reported subsequently to have disappeared from his home.

(b) In London. Mr. Harriman and Sir A. Clark Kerr would proceed at once to London for consultation with the British Government. The British Government would then discuss this question with M. Mikolajczyk, Mr. Harriman to participate representing the United States Government. The position reached in discussions with M. Molotov at Washington and San Francisco would be explained to him and he would be told that the British and United States Governments have reached the conclusion that it would be desirable in order to break the present deadlock to confront Marshal Stalin with firm proposals for the formation of a reorganised provisional Polish Government in accordance with the Crimea decisions. He would be told that the two Governments are convinced that at the present stage it will be impossible to secure more than from one-third to forty per cent share of representation in the new Government for non-Warsaw Poles from within Poland and from abroad. An attempt would be made to agree with M. Mikolajczyk on the specific Poles from within Poland and from abroad who would enter the Government beside himself, and the positions they would wish to hold either as Ministers or as Vice-Ministers; it being understood that there would be some fluidity and give and take on both sides. He would be asked to give a definite agreement that he would enter the reorganised Government on these terms.

(c) In Moscow. Having secured M. Mikolajczyk's agreement the Ambassadors would return to Moscow. The Prime Minister and the President would telegraph to Marshal Stalin asking him to receive them for the purpose of allowing them to present directly to him the final proposals of the American and British Governments on the Polish question. The Ambassadors would explain to Marshal Stalin that these proposals represented the minimum which the two Governments could regard as fulfilling the Crimea decisions. Marshal Stalin would be asked to accept them and to secure from the Provisional Government in Warsaw an undertaking that they for their part would agree to the formation of a reorganised Provisional Government of the basis proposed. It would be understood that M. Mikolajczyk and the principal Polish leaders who would take part in the new Government would proceed to Moscow to agree upon the conditions in which the new Government would be established and would function. It would be understood that this Government would be pledged to a policy of friendship towards the Soviet Union and that it would accept the decisions of the Crimea Conference. The Three Powers would afford the reorganised Government every assistance in establishing a strong, free, independent and democratic Poland. The reorganised Government would immediately be recognised by the Three Powers whose Ambassadors would at once proceed to Warsaw. The Three Powers would work with the reorganised Government in order to ensure the holding of free and unfettered elections as soon as

possible on the basis of universal suffrage and secret ballot. It would be agreed that the balance in the reorganised Government as between "Warsaw" Poles and "non-Warsaw" Poles would remain unchanged until such time as elections were held and a new Government constituted.'

Mr. Stettinius and Mr. Eden spoke to M. Molotov at San Francisco (a) on the morning of May 2 in accordance with their plan.¹ Mr. Stettinius appealed to M. Molotov that the three Powers should reach a solution of the Polish question at San Francisco simultaneously with a successful discussion of the problems of World Organisation. M. Molotov said that some progress had been made inasmuch as the Soviet Government now accepted M. Mikolajczyk as a candidate for consultation and were prepared to see him invited to Moscow at once. M. Molotov also agreed to M. Grabski but refused Mr. Eden's request that he should accept M. Stanczyk. He tried to argue that the third candidate from London should be a nominee of the Warsaw Government.

Mr. Eden also tried to persuade M. Molotov to agree to the names of the candidates from Poland; he pointed out that M. Mikolajczyk would want some information on this point before he left London. M. Molotov, however, maintained his refusal to discuss this question without consulting the Warsaw Poles. M. Molotov kept on asking that the Polish Provisional Government should be represented at San Francisco. Mr. Eden and Mr. Stettinius refused to accept this proposal, but Mr. Eden made the suggestion that, if agreement could be reached on a list of Poles from London and Poland, and if these Poles and the Commission went at once to Moscow, they might agree upon the formation of a new Government in time to enable a delegation to reach San Francisco before the end of the Conference. M. Molotov did not approve of this suggestion. No further progress was made in a private conversation between Mr. Eden and M. (b) Molotov on May 3. M. Molotov indeed was inclined to take the view that the Soviet Government had made a concession with regard to M. Mikolajczyk and that it was now our turn to contribute something to the settlement of the Polish question. He seemed to be thinking of a deal on the basis that we should allow Russia a free hand in Poland in return for the continuance of Russian non-intervention in our own spheres of interest.

In these circumstances it was difficult to see what progress could be made. The Foreign Office did not regard the joint plan as a very (c)

¹ i.e. in accordance with para. 1, heading (a), 'In San Francisco'. They did not at this interview put forward the whole plan.

(a) N4904/6/55. (b) N4996/6/55. (c) N4854/6/55.

hopeful solution. In any case they thought it better to await Stalin's answer to the Prime Minister's message of April 28. Before this answer was received a new crisis arose which, for the time, made further discussion impossible.

(vi)

The arrest of the fifteen Polish leaders: Stalin's message of May 4 to the Prime Minister: the Prime Minister's proposal for a meeting of the three Heads of Governments.

- (a) The Foreign Office had regarded the Soviet decision to conclude a treaty with the Polish Provisional Government as evidence of the failure of secret negotiations which the Soviet Government had been carrying on with representatives of the non-Lublin Poles. Information about these negotiations had been received only from the Polish Government in London. The Poles concerned—fifteen in all—included the London Government's 'Home Delegate', the former acting Commander-in-Chief of the Home Army, and the Underground leaders of the four democratic parties. The Russians were thought to have offered them six places in the Warsaw Government. The Russians would then claim that the Poles themselves had agreed on the reorganised Government envisaged in the Yalta declaration. Instead, however, of any announcement of agreement with the non-Lublin Poles, the fifteen Polish leaders themselves disappeared after the meetings of March 27 and 28 with Soviet military representatives at Prusko. On March 31 M. Witos also disappeared.

On April 4 Sir A. Clark Kerr, on instructions from the Foreign Office, enquired from M. Molotov about these meetings, and asked for assurances about the whereabouts and safety of the fifteen representatives. A week later M. Molotov replied that the Soviet military authorities had not been instructed to conduct any kind of negotiations with representatives of the London Government, and that he was enquiring about the arrests of which Sir A. Clark Kerr had written.

- (c) Sir A. Clark Kerr reported on April 12 that he had received a letter from M. Molotov (dated April 10) stating that the competent Soviet organs were 'overburdened with urgent work'; they could not undertake the investigation of communications concerning the arrest of 'these or those Poles', and could meet us 'only in so far as means are available'. With the Prime Minister's approval, Sir A. Clark Kerr was instructed on April 18 that we could not accept in silence an excessively rude letter of this kind, and he should reply

(a) N4413/6/55. (b) N4056, 5247/6/55. (c) N4031/6/55.

that, while we realised the preoccupations of the Soviet authorities, we expected them to do their utmost to find the information for which we had asked. The Polish Government had received a report that two Polish Christian Labour representatives about whom we had made enquiries had been imprisoned in a camp near Warsaw, kept there in sealed trucks for several days without food and water, and then taken away to an unknown destination.

No information had been received when Sir A. Clark Kerr left for Washington. The Soviet Government had also left without an answer enquiries which Sir A. Clark Kerr had made about M. Witos. On (a) April 21 Mr. Roberts wrote to M. Vyshinsky asking urgently for information about the missing Poles but again no answer was received from the Soviet Government.

On April 30 Mr. Law asked the Soviet Ambassador to call at the (b) Foreign Office. He told M. Gusev that for three weeks in succession there had been questions in the House of Commons concerning the whereabouts of M. Witos, M. Jankowski, and of the fourteen or fifteen other representatives of the Polish Government in London or the Underground movement who were said to have been invited by the Soviet authorities to discuss political questions with them. Mr. Law had replied to these questions that we had made enquiries from the Soviet Government, and had received no reply. It was extremely unsatisfactory to repeat this answer. The House of Commons, and public opinion generally, could not understand why the Soviet Government refused information to their British Allies on matters touching the Crimea agreement. We had now instructed our Chargé d'Affaires in Moscow to say that, if he could get no information from the Soviet authorities, Mr. Law would have to tell the House of Commons that we could give no assurance as to the safety of the Poles concerned. Mr. Law read to M. Gusev the text of a parliamentary question, to be answered on May 2, referring to reports of the public execution of non-Lublin Poles in the presence of senior officers of the Russian police. M. Gusev tried to argue that the Soviet Government was not responsible for what went on in Poland, and was not in a position to give information about Poland. Mr. Law replied that they could get such information from the Provisional Government in Warsaw.

No information was received by May 2, and the stalling replies caused great discontent and indeed anger in Parliament. Mr. Eden tried to get the facts about the missing Poles from M. Molotov, but without success. At a private meeting with M. Molotov on May 3 he (c) spoke strongly about the state of feeling in Great Britain over the disappearance of the Poles and the refusal of the Soviet Government

(a) N4720/6/55. (b) N5112/6/55. (c) N4996/6/55.

even to reply to our enquiries about them. M. Molotov said he had telegraphed to Moscow. He was sure that M. Witos was at liberty.¹ He gave no information about the other Poles.

Later in the day Mr. Harriman told Mr. Eden that M. Molotov had informed him of a telegram from Moscow reporting the arrest by the Red Army of sixteen² Poles on charges of anti-Soviet activities. M. Molotov had had a chance of giving Mr. Eden this information during the evening, but had said nothing to him about it.

Mr. Eden telegraphed on the night of May 3-4 that he had told Mr. Stettinius that they must have a meeting with M. Molotov on May 4 in order to question him on the matter, and to request full information. Mr. Eden reported that Mr. Harriman also took a very grave view of the matter and was sure that President Truman would feel similarly, and that the effects on American opinion would be serious.

- (a) Mr. Eden and Mr. Stettinius saw M. Molotov on the night of May 4-5. M. Molotov explained that he had received the news of the arrests only at 6 p.m. on May 3, and that he had been given no dates or details. The Poles had been arrested by the military authorities on Polish territory and would be tried by a military court. Their leader was General Okulicki, and their activities had been responsible for the death of a hundred Soviet officers.

Mr. Eden said that he knew nothing of General Okulicki, but that the arrest of the other Poles would cause a most deplorable effect in Great Britain. The men arrested were Polish patriots who had resisted the Germans and were supporters of collaboration with the Soviet Union. Mr. Eden would report M. Molotov's statement, but must now refuse to continue the discussion of Polish affairs in San Francisco. He asked whether it was true that the men had been called into consultation with General Ivanov with a view to negotiations about the formation of a Polish Provisional Government on a wider basis. M. Molotov replied that General Ivanov had no political mission and that the trial of the Poles would reveal the truth. Mr. Stettinius told M. Molotov that in the name of the United States Government he could endorse all that Mr. Eden had said. He agreed entirely that for the moment it was impossible to continue the discussion of the Polish question.³

The news of the arrests became known to press correspondents at San Francisco on May 4. Mr. Eden and Mr. Stettinius therefore decided to issue parallel statements on the morning of May 5 in which

¹ M. Witos, who had been arrested by the Lublin Poles, had in fact been released.

² i.e. including General Okulicki. See below, p. 544.

³ Mr. Eden concluded his telegram with the words, 'I have never seen M. Molotov look so uncomfortable'.

(a) N5009/6/55.

they would emphasise their grave concern at receiving such information after so long a delay, and their unwillingness, in the circumstances, to continue discussions on Poland.

On May 5 the Prime Minister received from Stalin a reply in the (a) following terms to his message of the night of April 28-9.

‘... I am obliged to say that I cannot agree with the arguments which you advance in support of your position.

You are inclined to regard the suggestion that the example of Yugoslavia should be taken as a model for Poland as a departure from the procedure agreed between us for the creation of a Polish Government of National Unity. This cannot be admitted. The example of Yugoslavia is important, in my opinion, principally as pointing the way to the most effective and practical solution of the problem of establishing a new United Government, there being taken as a basis for this purpose the Governmental organisation which is exercising sovereign power in the country.

It is quite understandable that, unless the Provisional Government, which is now functioning in Poland and which enjoys the support and confidence of the majority of the Polish people, is taken as the foundation of the future Government of National Unity, there is no possibility of envisaging a successful solution of the problem set before us by the Crimea Conference.

I am unable to share your views on the subject of Greece in the passage where you suggest that the Three Powers should supervise elections. Such supervision in relation to the people of an Allied State could not be regarded otherwise than as an insult to that people and a flagrant interference with its internal life. Such supervision is unnecessary in relation to the former satellite States which have subsequently declared war on Germany and joined the Allies, as has been shown by the experience of the elections which have taken place, for instance, in Finland: here elections have been held without any outside intervention and have led to constructive results.

Your remarks concerning Belgium and Poland as theatres of war and corridors of communication are entirely unjustified. It is a question of Poland's peculiar position as a neighbour state of the Soviet Union which demands that the future Polish Government should actively strive for friendly relations between Poland and the Soviet Union, which is likewise in the interest of all other peace-loving nations. This is a further argument for following the example of Yugoslavia. The United Nations are concerned that there should be a firm and lasting friendship between the Soviet Union and Poland. Consequently we cannot be satisfied that persons should be associated with the formation of the future Polish Government who, as you express it, “are not fundamentally anti-Soviet”, or that only those persons should be excluded from participation in this work who are in your opinion “extremely unfriendly towards Russia”.

(a) T782/5 (Churchill Papers/356; N5091/6/55).

Neither of these criteria can satisfy us. We insist and shall insist that there should be brought into consultation on the formation of the future Polish Government only those persons who have actively shown a very friendly attitude towards the Soviet Union and who are honestly and sincerely prepared to co-operate with the Soviet State.

I must comment especially on Point 2 of your message, in which you mention difficulties arising as a result of rumours of the arrest of fifteen Poles, of deportations and so forth.

As to this, I can inform you that the group of Poles to which you refer consists not of fifteen but of sixteen persons, and is headed by the well-known Polish General Okulicki. In view of his especially odious character the British Information Service is careful to be silent on the subject of this Polish General, who "disappeared" together with the fifteen other Poles who are said to have done likewise. But we do not propose to be silent on this subject. This party of sixteen individuals headed by General Okulicki was arrested by the military authorities on the Soviet front and is undergoing investigation in Moscow. General Okulicki's group and especially the General himself are accused of planning and carrying out diversionary acts in the rear of the Red Army which resulted in the loss of over 100 fighters and officers of that Army, and are also accused of maintaining illegal wireless transmitting stations in the rear of our troops which is contrary to law. All or some of them, according to the result of the investigation, will be handed over for trial. This is the manner in which it is necessary for the Red Army to defend its troops and its rear from diversionists and disturbers of order.

The British Information Service is disseminating rumours of the murder or shooting of Poles in Siedlice. These statements of the British Information Service are complete fabrications and have evidently been suggested to it by agents of Arciszewski.

It appears from your message that you are not prepared to regard the Polish Provisional Government as the foundation of the future Government of National Unity and that you are not prepared to accord it its rightful position in that Government. I must say frankly that such an attitude excludes the possibility of an agreed solution of the Polish question.¹

- (a) On May 6 the Prime Minister telegraphed to President Truman a copy of this message. He commented that matters could hardly be carried further by correspondence, and that the three Heads of Governments should meet as soon as possible.¹ Meanwhile 'we should hold firmly to the position obtained or being obtained by our armies in Yugoslavia, in Austria, in Czechoslovakia, in the main central United States front and on the British front reaching up to Lübeck and including Denmark'. The Prime Minister asked that President Truman should not say, in any message to Stalin, that he had seen

¹ See also below, pp. 573-5.

(a) T793/5, No. 34 (Churchill Papers/356; N5109/6/55).

the latter's telegram. The Prime Minister was as anxious as the President to avoid the impression of 'ganging up' against Stalin, 'while at the same time maintaining our essential unity of action on matters affecting good faith and international morality'.

Mr. Truman telegraphed on May 5 to the Prime Minister that he (a) had sent a message to Stalin saying that he agreed with the Prime Minister's message of April 28 and that the United States Government could not accept the Russian proposal that representatives of the Warsaw Provisional Government should be invited to the San Francisco Conference.

On May 9 Mr. Eden telegraphed that Mr. Stettinius and Mr. Har- (b) riman had been considering what should be the next move on the Polish question. They thought it important to keep the question open and before Stalin's attention pending a three-Power meeting. Hence they suggested that Mr. Harriman and Sir A. Clark Kerr should see the Prime Minister and M. Mikolajczyk in London, in order to discover whether (on the lines of the earlier joint plan) it was possible to reach agreement about the form and personnel of a reorganised Polish Government. The two Ambassadors might then go to Moscow to discuss the matter further with Stalin. Mr. Harriman did not consider that there was much chance of progress on these lines, but he thought that Stalin was likely to be more open to argument than M. Molotov, and that it might be possible to narrow down our differences with the Russians before the three-Power meeting.

The Foreign Office regarded the American proposal as impracticable. M. Mikolajczyk could hardly be expected to support it while his friends (and indeed all the non-Lublin democratic leaders) were in a Russian prison. Stalin would also insist upon the 'Yugoslav precedent'. The fact that the Americans put forward the suggestion was a disquieting sign of weakening; there was a risk that if the matter came to discussions with M. Molotov on the Commission, they might agree to something very like the 'Yugoslav precedent'. Mr. Eden was therefore asked on May 12 to express strongly the Prime Minister's dislike of the plan.

(vii)

Mr. Hopkins's visit to Moscow: resumption of the work of the Moscow Commission: agreement among the Polish leaders: the sentences on the arrested Poles: Anglo-American recognition of the new Provisional Government (May 14-July 5, 1945).

President Truman agreed to the proposal for a tripartite meeting, (c) but explained that, owing to pressure of current business and, in

(a) T767/5, No. 25 (Churchill Papers/356; N5109/6/55). (b) N5169/6/55.
(c) T853/5, No. 31 (Churchill Papers/473; N5299/6/55).

- particular, the preparation of his Budget message to Congress, he could not come to Europe before July 1. The President also agreed with the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden that until we knew the fate
- (a) of the arrested Polish leaders, we should stand firmly on the Anglo-American interpretation of the Yalta Agreement. He said to Mr. Eden that he did not think that we should get a solution of the Polish problem. Mr. Truman indeed was indignant over the Russian failure to keep their word on other matters—as well as on the Polish question
- (b)—in the Yalta Agreement. Mr. Grew and Mr. Harriman also took the view that the release of the imprisoned Poles (with the possible exception of General Okulicki) must be a *sine qua non* of an attempt to reach an understanding with M. Mikolajczyk over the reorganisation of the Polish Government. Mr. Harriman considered that Anglo-American efforts to reach a settlement on the basis of the Yalta Agreement had failed, and that we might review our ideas about our ultimate objectives in the way of a reorganised Government in order to have proposals ready if Stalin were later willing to come to a settlement. Mr. Harriman also thought that it might help to break the deadlock if Stalin were to receive messages from the President and the Prime Minister stating plainly that he was sacrificing co-operation with his Allies by his insistence on dominating the Poles.

Mr. Truman, however, now decided to make another attempt to reach a settlement of the Polish issue and generally to try to bring about a *détente* in Russo-American relations. The President sent Mr. Hopkins on a special mission to Moscow on May 23,¹ and in so doing without previous consultation with the British Government made it impossible for the latter to continue their policy of no negotiation until the imprisoned Poles were released. Furthermore, the fact that the President was willing to hold separate and independent discussions with the Soviet Government through a confidential envoy showed that the Americans were readier to make concessions—otherwise there was no reason for private negotiation. It was also obvious that if the United States Government would be content with ‘papering over the cracks’, the British Government alone could not compel the Russians to respect their promises with regard to the Poles.

- Mr. Hopkins had his first talk with Stalin on May 26. He and Mr. Harriman kept Sir A. Clark Kerr informed of the results of the conversations. Mr. Hopkins told Sir A. Clark Kerr on May 29 that he
- (c) and Mr. Harriman had the impression that Stalin wanted to find a way out of the deadlock, and that, unlike M. Molotov, who had argued at San Francisco that Poland stood to Russia as Mexico to the

¹ For this mission, see also below, pp. 579–80. For the American record of Mr. Hopkins’s conversations in Moscow, see *F.R.U.S., Conference of Berlin (Potsdam)*, 1945, 21–62.

(a) N5503/6/55. (b) N5564/6/55. (c) N6141/165/38.

United States, and that the Soviet Government did not interfere in Mexico, he (Stalin) agreed that the United States had a right to play a part in the future of Poland, since Europe had dragged her (the United States) into two wars which could not have been won without American help. Stalin was also willing to admit M. Mikolajczyk into the Polish Government, though he insisted that the Warsaw Government should be the basis of the new Government. He said again and again to Mr. Hopkins that he wanted a strong and independent Poland, but that the Polish Government must be friendly to the U.S.S.R.

Sir A. Clark Kerr reported on June 1 that Mr. Hopkins had had (a) two more talks with Stalin about Poland. At the first talk Stalin was 'accommodating but non-committal'; at the second talk, in which M. Molotov played a large part, he was 'in a trading mood', and 'inclined to drive a bargain'. Stalin suggested that the Moscow Commission should get to work again on the basis of calling for consultation the following non-Lublin Poles; (i) from London, MM. Mikolajczyk, Grabski (or Stanczyk) or Kolodzei,¹ (ii) from Poland, MM. Witos (or Archbishop Sapieha), Zulawski,² Krzyzanowski³ and Kolodzieski.⁴

Sir A. Clark Kerr considered the list as good as could have been hoped for; he advised acceptance of it on condition that something could be done about the Poles under arrest. He said that Mr. Hopkins had discussed the latter question with Stalin. Stalin was 'tough' but not unresponsive; he alleged that General Okulicki had undoubtedly been guilty of acts of terrorism and must be dealt with accordingly. The 'majority of the other Poles' had been in wireless communication with London,⁵ and this was a serious offence. On pressure from Mr. Hopkins he seemed ready to admit that there was no other charge against them. When Mr. Hopkins said that the war was over and that the whole affair might well be forgotten, Stalin

¹ Formerly leader of the Polish Seamen's Union in London but expelled from it after he had declared himself in favour of the Lublin Government.

² A Socialist Party leader.

³ Rector of the University of Cracow.

⁴ Director of the Library of the Sejm and head of the Co-operative Union.

⁵ i.e. with the Polish Government in London, and incidentally, with the British Government. Mr. Hopkins does not appear to have argued with Stalin that the British Government on their side had no reason to regard it as a crime for Poles in Poland to communicate with the legal Polish Government in London. Throughout the conversations Stalin maintained the Soviet thesis that the Polish Underground leaders were not only anti-Soviet, but were linked with British espionage agents. There is no evidence to show that Mr. Hopkins contradicted this view, or that he attempted to defend General Okulicki or to point out that the Soviet Government had been liquidating the whole of the Underground movement. Mr. Hopkins, in answer to a complaint from Stalin that Great Britain wanted to 'revive the system of *cordon sanitaire*' on the Soviet borders, replied merely that such was not the policy of the United States. (R. E. Sherwood, *The White House Papers of Harry L. Hopkins*, II (Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1949), 878.)

(a) N6293/6/55.

indicated that this fact would be taken into consideration and that the prisoners would be dealt with leniently, but that the trial must proceed.

In a later telegram of June 1 Sir A. Clark Kerr added that Mr. Hopkins would try to obtain the release of all the arrested Poles except General Okulicki but that Stalin might refuse to release without trial anyone officially connected with the London Government. Sir A. Clark Kerr thought that M. Mikolajczyk might feel able to come to Moscow if the eight political leaders in whom he was specially interested were released. None of the Poles to be invited from Poland were Warsaw 'stooges'. On the other hand Stalin's proposal related only to consultations, and did not prejudice the eventual composition of the new Government. There still remained the 'hurdle' of Stalin's 'Yugoslav formula'. The Russians seemed, however, to want to break the present deadlock partly owing to international complications and partly, perhaps, owing to the problem of Polish

- (a) deportees in Germany now under our control. There were, in fact, some two million Poles either with the armed forces of the Western Powers or as displaced persons in the western zone of Germany. This manpower was much needed in Poland and could be brought back only by agreement with Great Britain and the United States.
- (b) On June 1 President Truman sent a message to the Prime Minister giving him an account of Mr. Hopkins's conversations, and describing them as 'very encouraging'. The Prime Minister, who had received M. Mikolajczyk's views (though these views had not yet been given full study), replied on June 2 that he thought that Mr. Hopkins had made 'very remarkable progress' at Moscow and that he was 'entirely in sympathy with what he had already achieved'. The Prime Minister asked whether the points raised by M. Mikolajczyk could be cleared up by Mr. Hopkins, 'if his health can stand it before he leaves'. He said that he was having the matter examined in more detail by the Foreign Office and that he was ready to put more pressure on M. Mikolajczyk if he made 'needless difficulties'.¹
- (d) Meanwhile the Foreign Office were considering M. Mikolajczyk's views. These views were transmitted in telegrams of June 4 to Mr. Truman and to Lord Halifax for communication to the State Department, together with a personal message from the Prime Minister. The
- (e) Prime Minister's message was longer than that of June 2, and, in

¹ The Prime Minister added that, owing to the temporary illness of Mr. Eden, he was dealing with the Foreign Office business. It was announced on June 3 that Mr. Eden had been ordered to rest on account of a duodenal ulcer. He returned to the Foreign Office on July 10.

(a) N11098/35/55. (b) T1038/5, No. 53, Churchill Papers/356. (c) T1050/5, No. 67, Churchill Papers/356. (d) N6381/6/55. (e) T1060/5, No. 72 (Churchill Papers/356; N6381/6/55).

view of the considerations put forward by M. Mikolajczyk and the Foreign Office, less optimistic in its language. The Prime Minister agreed that Mr. Hopkins's efforts had now broken the deadlock; he was willing that an invitation should be sent to the non-Lublin Poles on the proposed basis if nothing more could be gained at the moment. He also agreed that the question of the arrested Poles should not hamper the opening of the discussions, although we could not give up our efforts on their behalf.

The Prime Minister then pointed out that, while it was prudent and right to act in this way, the Russian proposals were not an advance on the Yalta Agreement and that by this time, according to the spirit and letter of Yalta, we should have had a representative Polish Government. All we had secured was that a number of 'outside Poles' should take part in preliminary discussions which might result in some improvement upon the Lublin Government. We could not regard these concessions as 'more than a milestone in a long hill we ought never to have been asked to climb'. The Prime Minister thought that we ought to guard against any newspaper assumptions that the Polish problems had been solved or that the difficulties between the Western democracies and the Soviet Government on the matter had been more than relieved. Finally the Prime Minister was anxious for the sessions of the Moscow Commission to be resumed, especially with the invited delegates, before the meeting of the three Heads of Governments, since 'the Three', as Stalin described them, could do more 'in a fortunate hour' than was possible between M. Molotov and the Ambassadors.

The telegram containing M. Mikolajczyk's views stated that he (a) and M. Stanczyk would be prepared to accept the invitation on the sole condition that it was issued by the Commission of Three in accordance with the Yalta decisions. M. Grabski was too ill to come, but M. Mikolajczyk regarded M. Witos's presence as essential. M. Mikolajczyk made other suggestions about names, but said that he would not defer his coming until the release of the arrested Poles, though he considered their release to be necessary in order to create appropriate conditions for the conversations.¹ The Foreign Office regarded M. Mikolajczyk's points as reasonable. They also repeated the Prime Minister's statement that the Russian 'concession' merely brought us back to the terms of the Yalta Agreement; we should have to continue pressure to secure real results and should avoid giving an impression that the Polish question had been solved.

¹ M. Mikolajczyk pointed out that Mr. Hopkins had used the term 'amnesty' but that, on the Russian interpretation, 'amnesty' did not exclude detention and isolation. The term 'release' was therefore essential. In his telegram of June 2 to Mr. Truman the Prime Minister had said that the word 'amnesty' should be interpreted as including 'release'.

(a) N6381/6/55.

M. Mikolajczyk himself was not hopeful. He thought that the Russians, under pressure, were merely giving way as regards the conversations, and that they knew that the subsequent step, i.e. the formation of a Government, was the only point of real importance.

- (a) During the next few days Mr. Hopkins continued his efforts with regard to the arrested men, and negotiations also took place over the list of names of the Poles to be invited to Moscow for consultation. In particular, difficulties arose because M. Witos was prevented by illness from accepting the invitation.¹ M. Mikolajczyk had also asked that all four of the main Polish political parties should be represented but Stalin refused to go beyond the list drawn up by M. Molotov which included representatives only of two of the parties. Stalin also refused to commit himself to the release of the arrested men, though
- (b) Mr. Hopkins and Mr. Harriman had the impression that he would 'do something in his own way' to meet our request.

- (c) Meanwhile the British and American Governments had further exchanges on the line to be taken in the discussions. Sir A. Clark Kerr mentioned to the Foreign Office on June 6 the two most important points which M. Molotov was likely to raise, or even to assume as settled. He would probably say that we were now agreed that the purpose of the consultations was to produce a Government of National Unity, admittedly new and reconstructed, but having as its 'main nucleus' the present Provisional Government. He would also revert to the 'Yugoslav parallel'. At one of his earlier meetings with Mr. Hopkins, Stalin appeared to have suggested that only four new Ministers need be introduced. The question was not pursued, and Mr. Hopkins had intended to reserve our position in order to avoid subsequent misunderstandings.

Sir A. Clark Kerr pointed out that hitherto we had refused to accept the principle that the present Provisional Government was to be the 'basis', 'foundation', or 'nucleus' of the new Government and, in particular, we had rejected the 'Yugoslav parallel'. We had done so mainly because we feared that acceptance of any term such as 'basis' would be used by the Russians to prevent more than a very few non-Warsaw Poles from joining the new Government, but for some time past we had expected that the present Government would have a majority of the seats. We ought still to hold out against the 'Yugoslav parallel' which would give the non-Warsaw Poles only about 15 per cent rather than the 40 per cent suggested by Mr. Eden at San Francisco. On the other hand we should probably get better results if we recognised the fact that the Provisional Government would not

¹ The Russians finally agreed to accept M. Kiernik, a Peasant Party leader nominated by M. Mikolajczyk, in place of M. Witos.

(a) N6367, 6368, 6369, 6422, 6481, 6689/6/55. (b) N6535/6/55. (c) N6534/6/55.

give up the reality of power and that the new Government must be built around it.

The Prime Minister replied, on the basis of a Foreign Office draft, to (a) Sir A. Clark Kerr on June 9 that in accepting Stalin's list of names without further conditions we had already retreated markedly from our previous position and that by our agreement (which Mr. Hopkins regarded as necessary) that any additional invitations must be approved by all members of the Commission, we should be giving way to the original Russian claim that the Warsaw Poles had the right to veto our candidates.

Our concessions would be justified only if the conversations resulted in the formation of a reorganised Provisional Government in which elements not included in the present Provisional Government received substantial representation and a proportion of key positions. We could not therefore allow ourselves to be committed to any percentage such as the Yugoslav formula (which had, in fact turned out to be a fraud, and had led to the present position in Yugoslavia). We could, however, point out that—as the message of April 18 from the Prime Minister and the President showed—we had never denied that 'among the three elements from which the new Provisional Government of National Unity is to be formed, the representatives of the present Warsaw Government will play unquestionably a prominent part'.

The one 'absolutely essential requirement', if Parliament and public opinion were to accept a settlement reached in Moscow, was that the British Government should not be open to the charge of following the Munich pattern and, for the sake of Anglo-Soviet relations, of imposing on an unwilling Polish people a settlement agreed upon in advance among the Great Powers. We must above all else maintain the position that the Commission had to act as mediators only, and to assist the Poles among themselves to reach a settlement which could then be endorsed and approved by the Powers. This settlement would certainly be 'based upon' the present Warsaw Government, but 'so far as public appearances are concerned, it is one thing for the Poles themselves to reach the conclusion that such is the logical outcome, and quite another matter for them to be told before they begin their discussions that this is what they must accept'.

Contrary to Mr. Hopkins's and Mr. Harriman's hopes, Stalin did not make a gesture by releasing any of the prisoners. On June 14 the Soviet Government announced that their trial would take place in a few days' time. M. Mikolajczyk was at first disposed to think it impossible for him to carry out his decision to go to Moscow when his political friends were on trial. The Prime Minister, however, saw him

(a) N6696/6/55.

- in the afternoon of June 15, and was able to persuade him not to
- (a) abandon his decision to try for a settlement, since the Russians would certainly say that once again they had invited him to Moscow and that he had refused to go. MM. Mikolajczyk and Stanczyk therefore
 - (b) left for Moscow on the morning of June 16. The Prime Minister sent a strong personal appeal to Sir A. Clark Kerr to give M. Mikolajczyk his utmost support.
 - (c) In spite of the unfavourable atmosphere produced by the trials the Poles from London were surprised at the friendliness of their reception by the Soviet authorities and the members of the Warsaw Government. M. Mikolajczyk was able to hear a first-hand account of conditions in Poland from the non-Warsaw Poles. They supported him unanimously, and insisted upon his return to Poland. They were, however, so eager to put an end to the existing chaos in Poland that they were prepared to reach agreement on almost any terms in the hope that M. Mikolajczyk would later be able to strengthen his position in the country when he was back in Warsaw. At a party given by M. Molotov on the evening of June 16 it was agreed that the Poles should be left to consult among themselves before any formal meeting took place with the Commission. M. Mikolajczyk, in particular, felt that he could not commit himself until the arrival of M. Kiernik who was expected to bring messages from M. Witos.

The Commission held a formal meeting on June 18 under the chairmanship of M. Molotov. On the Polish side only the representatives of the Warsaw Government attended the meeting. They explained that they were not yet ready with a plan, and the Commission agreed not to meet again until the Polish proposals were ready or until M. Mikolajczyk or any other of the Poles asked for a meeting. On June 20 Sir A. Clark Kerr invited all the Poles to meet the members of the Commission at the British Embassy. The atmosphere was again cordial, and further progress was made in resolving differences between the various groups.

M. Mikolajczyk kept in close touch throughout these days with Sir A. Clark Kerr. He said that at first he had hoped to secure a substantial reconstruction of the Provisional Government with himself as Prime Minister, but that he soon realised that his colleagues from London and from Poland were too anxious for a settlement to support him in risking a deadlock on this issue. In particular M. Stanczyk had spoiled any chances of such an arrangement by accepting the terms of the Provisional Government. These terms gave M. Mikolajczyk the post of Vice-President, and allowed six seats out of twenty in the reconstructed Government for his nominees.

(a) N7425/6/55. (b) T1142/5 (Churchill Papers/356; N6889/6/55). (c) N11089/35/55.

In these circumstances M. Mikolajczyk concentrated upon strengthening the position of his own Peasant Party inside Poland. M. Kiernik convinced him that, in fact, the Peasant Party was still the strongest in Poland, and that it was solidly behind him (M. Mikolajczyk) and M. Witos. The representatives of the Provisional Government themselves admitted that they needed M. Mikolajczyk and the Peasant Party, and that they had failed to bring about a substantial secession from that party. The Socialist Party was divided and ineffective; the National Democrat Party was ruled out owing to the behaviour of many of its members during the occupation, and the Christian Labour and Democrat Parties were relatively unimportant. M. Mikolajczyk therefore tried to establish relations with the Communist leader, M. Gomulka; the reconstruction of the Government was, in fact, based mainly upon the Peasant and Communist Parties, although the Socialists and Democrats were also well represented.

On June 21 the Poles had reached an unanimous agreement (a) among themselves. They met the Commission during the evening. M. Bierut then announced the terms of the settlement. According to these terms M. Bierut became Chairman, and MM. Grabski and Witos members of a Presidium of the Polish National Council which was to be regarded as the temporary sovereign body of the new Polish State. The reorganised executive Government consisted of twenty persons, including three new members from Poland and three from abroad, with M. Morawski as Prime Minister and M. Mikolajczyk as one of his two deputies.¹

M. Mikolajczyk announced his agreement with the proposals. He (b) spoke of the necessity for the collaboration of Poland with the Great Powers and of his understanding with M. Bierut that the Government and National Council would be further widened on the basis of genuine and proportional party representation. Sir A. Clark Kerr said that he would like to be able to report to his government that the principle of loyal co-operation between the political parties represented in the agreement would be maintained until the elections. M. Mikolajczyk promised such co-operation on his part, and expected it from others.

Mr. Harriman reminded the meeting that the United States looked for freedom of discussion, etc. for all political parties at the elections in accordance with the Crimea decision. At Sir A. Clark Kerr's suggestion he urged the new Government to show the utmost sympathy and generosity to former political opponents, and to give

¹ M. Mikolajczyk was also Minister of Agriculture. M. Gomulka was the other deputy Prime Minister.

(a) N7299/6/55. (b) N7298/6/55.

an amnesty to all those involved in political charges in order to create the necessary atmosphere of confidence for the return of Poles from abroad.

- This last advice was especially necessary in view of the sentences
- (a) on the arrested Poles. These sentences were delivered on June 21. General Okulicki received ten years' imprisonment, another prisoner a sentence of eight years, and two others five years each; two received one and a half years and one a sentence of twelve months. Three were acquitted, and the remainder were sentenced to imprisonment for eight months or less. M. Molotov told Mr. Harriman, who had asked
 - (b) again for lenient treatment of the arrested men, that those with short sentences would soon be released since the time during which they had already been in prison would be set against their sentences.

Sir A. Clark Kerr, in reporting the verdict, considered that, as far as our own interests were concerned, we could be well satisfied with the conduct of the trial. The Russians might have made more, from their point of view, of the fact that we must have known about the maintenance of wireless communication between the Poles and the Polish Government in London. Sir A. Clark Kerr thought that the prosecution had been conducted reasonably, and that the defendants had been given full opportunity to state their case.¹

- (c) The Foreign Office replied on June 22 to Sir A. Clark Kerr's telegram asking for official approval of the settlement. He was told that he could accept the settlement in his capacity as British member of the Moscow Commission. The British Government, however, were not committed to a recognition of the new Government until they were satisfied that it had been 'properly formed' according to the first two paragraphs of the Yalta Agreement. These paragraphs included the condition that the new Government should be pledged, after its formation, to hold free and unfettered elections, as soon as possible, on the basis of universal suffrage and secret ballot, in which all democratic and anti-Nazi parties should have the right to take part and to put forward candidates. Sir A. Clark Kerr was instructed to make this point clear in giving his approval of the settlement in order that there should be no misunderstanding.
- (d) The Prime Minister was much dissatisfied at the heavy sentences passed on General Okulicki and his colleagues. He disagreed with Sir A. Clark Kerr's view that we could be well satisfied with the

¹ See also note at the end of this section.

(a) N7290/35/55. (b) N7299/6/55. (c) N7299/6/55. (d) N7290/35/55; N7296/6/55.

conduct of the trial. Sir A. Clark Kerr was instructed that, in our view, the ultimate recognition of the new Government would be celebrated most fittingly by a grant of amnesty including even those Poles who had just received heavy sentences.

Sir A. Clark Kerr carried out his instructions with regard to the acceptance of the Polish agreement at the final meeting of the Moscow Commission on June 22. At this meeting the Poles also raised a number of questions such as the Polish representation on international bodies (e.g. the Reparation and War Crimes Commissions), the western frontiers of Poland, and even the omission of the word 'Provisional' from the title of the Government. M. Molotov supported their demands, but Sir A. Clark Kerr and Mr. Harriman pointed out that most of the questions were outside the terms of reference of the Commission, and that, in accordance with the Yalta Agreement, the new Government was to be described as 'Provisional'.

On June 23 Stalin gave a dinner to the Poles, at which, after contrasting present and former Polish-Soviet relations, he said that the Polish-Soviet alliance would not in itself be enough to remove the risk of renewed German aggression; Poland must therefore also have alliances with other European countries, including Great Britain and France, and must maintain the closest relations with the United States.

The formation of the new Polish Provisional Government was announced in Warsaw on June 29. Meanwhile the Foreign Office and the State Department exchanged views on the conditions of a formal recognition of the new Provisional Government. The Foreign Office wished to delay recognition until the Provisional Government should have given, either publicly or to the British, United States and Soviet Governments, a pledge to hold free elections according to the Yalta Agreement. The State Department thought that it would be better not to ask for an assurance; they proposed, however, to include in their announcement a statement to the effect that the formation of the new Government in accordance with the Yalta decisions necessarily involved, as the next step, the holding of free and unfettered elections. The Foreign Office accepted the American view, but a minor difficulty of synchronising the announcement of recognition arose when the President telegraphed on July 2 suggesting 7 p.m. on July 3 for this announcement. The Prime Minister telegraphed that we needed longer notice. We had to take account of the position of the Polish Government in London with its officials; we had also to give careful consideration to the attitude of the Polish army of 170,000.

(a) N11089/35/55. (b) N7538/6/55. (c) N7540/6/55. (d) T1208/5, No. 83
(Churchill Papers/473; N7983/6/55); N7901, 7902, 7981/6/55. (e) T1210/5, No. 101
(Churchill Papers/473; N7983/6/55).

- We had been hoping to give the London Poles at least 24 hours' notice of our formal announcement; they had asked for this notice, and their request seemed reasonable. The Prime Minister therefore suggested that President Truman should substitute 7 p.m. on July 4 for July 3 as the time of the announcement. The President replied that
- (a) July 4—as Independence Day—would be unsuitable. He suggested
 - (b) 7 p.m. on July 5. The Prime Minister agreed, and the formal announcements were made at this time.

A long dispute was thus settled, at least on paper, by agreement. The Poles had not been treated like the Czechs in the Munich Agreement, but the settlement was far from being an expression of the free choice of the Polish people. Polish (and British) opinion—with good reason—felt doubts about the genuineness of the promises made by the Warsaw Poles and their Russian supporters. Nevertheless the Russians had at least acknowledged the interest of the Western Powers and their claim to assert their wishes in relation to Poland. The settlement indeed raised other problems, such as the future of the Poles in London and of the Polish armed forces. The large and difficult question of the delimitation of the western frontier of Poland was unsettled, and had already brought serious difficulties between the British and Soviet Governments,¹ but there was hope that M. Mikolajczyk and his supporters, including large numbers of Poles who might now go back to their country, would be able to maintain satisfactory contact with the Russians and the Western Powers, and that, in their own interest, the Poles would not endanger their future security by taking more German territory than they could absorb or by leaving the defeated Germans with an intolerable grievance. It was thus impossible to say, at this stage, that the Polish question had been solved, but at all events there were chances of a solution; without an agreement between Lublin and non-Lublin Poles, no such chance would have existed, and the hopes raised at San Francisco of collaboration between the Western Powers and the U.S.S.R. would have faded at once.

Note to section (vii). Sir A. Clark Kerr's report on the arrest and trial of the fifteen Polish leaders.

- (c) On July 4, 1945, Sir A. Clark Kerr sent a despatch (received on July 18) dealing with the Soviet trial of the arrested Poles. In this despatch he pointed out that the defendants included the Commander of the Polish Underground army, the delegate of the Polish Government in London and three members of his Underground Cabinet, and

¹ See Volume V, Chapter LXVIII, section (ii).

(a) T1212/5, No. 85 (Churchill Papers/473; N7983/6/55). (b) T1213/5, No. 102 (Churchill Papers/473; N7983/6/55). (c) N8715/35/55.

leaders of the four Polish political parties, including some of those suggested by the British and United States Governments, at the instance of M. Mikolajczyk, for participation in consultations with the Moscow Commission of Three. It was clear therefore that the Soviet Government intended finally to liquidate the Polish military and political Underground organisation, and to expose the anti-Soviet activities of the Polish Government in London.

The defendants, with one exception, pleaded guilty. The prosecution was conducted with relative moderation, and the accused men showed no signs of physical ill-treatment. At first, indeed, foreign observers at the trial were inclined to think that the case for the prosecution was established, and that the British and United States Governments had taken up the case on the basis of inadequate information.

These impressions changed as the trial proceeded. General Okulicki, in particular, defended himself extremely well. It was soon established that the official Polish Home Army and Underground organisation had never ceased to fight with all its strength against the Germans. M. Bien, one of the accused men, put this point convincingly when he said that only since he had been in a Soviet prison was he able to sleep at night free from fear of arrest. Two of the men had been in a German concentration camp. General Okulicki was able to show that he had been instructed by General Sosnkowski to fight the Germans to the end. The evidence of terrorist acts against the Soviet Army was confined to areas with which General Okulicki had ceased to be in communication.

The prosecution also produced no answer to the question of the fate of the Polish detachments who had fought the Germans when these detachments, in accordance with orders from London, presented themselves to the Soviet Army. Similarly the prosecution acknowledged by implication that the arrested men had been invited, under personal guarantee of their safety, to meet General Ivanov as the representative of Marshal Zhukov. The defendants also showed that they had wished for reconciliation with Russia, and had decided to keep their organisation in being, not for immediate action against the Soviet Army, but only (when they had begun to be suspicious of Soviet intentions) for defending Polish independence in the event of any later threats.

The trials had been successful in discrediting the London Government among the Poles, and also in destroying or discrediting the main centres of potential opposition to the Bierut group in Poland before the new Provisional Government had been set up. On the other hand, in one important respect the trials were a failure. The accused men had shown themselves to be, not Fascist reactionaries or landlords, but good democrats and patriots who had suspected, not without cause, the intentions of the Soviet Government with regard to Poland. After they had been 'forced into opposition by Moscow and Lublin, they had been trapped by an offer to negotiate and a guarantee of personal immunity, and finally induced to confess on being convinced

that Soviet policy towards Poland had changed into one of the utmost benevolence'. These Soviet professions of friendship, although probably sincere, would have carried little conviction outside the U.S.S.R. and least of all to Poles abroad who had to decide whether they would now return to Poland.

CHAPTER XLVI

Anglo-Russian relations, March–July 1945

(i)

The Russian-sponsored coup d'état in Roumania: Sir A. Clark Kerr's memorandum of March 27 on Russian policy since the Yalta Conference: Sir O. Sargent's memorandum of March 13 on British policy towards Russian security demands in south-eastern Europe: Russian reluctance to take part in international economic planning for Europe (February–April 1945).

The Russian attitude over the Polish question—amounting in fact to a repudiation of the Yalta agreement—was the most serious problem in Anglo-Russian relations between the Yalta and Potsdam Conferences. There were, however, other examples, hardly less serious in their implications, of the disregard by the Soviet Government of the 'Declaration on Liberated Europe.' Thus within a fortnight after the Yalta communiqué the Russians brought about a *coup d'état* at Bucharest which must have been planned before or during the Conference. Early in December General Radescu had formed a new Roumanian administration; the Communists were in a minority in the Cabinet, but held—in accordance with their usual practice—the Ministry of the Interior and of Justice. After a visit by leading Roumanian Communists to Moscow an agitation was started against General Radescu and the non-Communist majority in his Government. This agitation was stepped up in February, and on February 24 rioting broke out in Bucharest. Two days later M. Vyshinsky went to Bucharest and insisted upon the resignation of General Radescu and the appointment of a Communist-controlled puppet Government. The Russian action was taken without reference to the British and United States Governments, and was clearly against the wishes of the majority of Roumanians. King Michael of Roumania asked for British and American support.

The British Government had to decide whether—in spite of the Yalta declaration—they would or would not acquiesce in the Russian control of south-eastern Europe outside Greece. They were also brought once again to the sharp question whether the Russians intended to throw over the policy of post-war collaboration on the

¹ See Volume V, Chapter LXXV, section (i).

basis of the Anglo-Soviet treaty, and to use their newly-acquired power to dominate Europe, or whether they intended only to settle for themselves, in their own way, and irrespective of the views of the Western Powers, the problem of security along their European frontiers. In the latter case there was little or nothing that the Western Powers could do to prevent Russian control of south-eastern Europe (outside Greece), and a refusal to recognise the facts might have the disastrous consequence of driving the Soviet Government further into isolation, and wrecking the chances of getting their co-operation in other matters.

Hence, in order to avoid this major danger, the Foreign Office inclined to give way before the Russian claims as far as concerned south-eastern Europe but to hold out for the fulfilment of the Yalta agreement over Poland, though indeed the argument that the Russians were in possession and could not be turned out applied no less in the Polish case than in that of the Danubian States. The reports from the Embassy in Moscow tended to confirm the view that, although the Soviet demands were much harsher than had been expected, and the promises made at Yalta were being broken, there was no reason to give up all hope of co-operation once the Russians had carried out their plans for their own security. On the other hand they would not be persuaded to change these plans.

- (a) On January 16, before the Yalta Conference, Mr. Balfour,¹ in a letter to the Northern Department,² had pointed out that it had been clear since the end of 1943 that Soviet policy had regarded south-eastern Europe as well as Poland as a 'security zone' in which the U.S.S.R. had a special interest. No plans for world organisation or security pacts with the Western Powers would deflect the Soviet Government from this policy. The Russians were thinking on traditional lines and were confirmed in their desire for security against the west by their general suspicions of the bourgeois world. They would require Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia to look to Russia and not to the Western Powers for their defence. They would also be unrelenting in their retaliation on the Germans. Owing to the increasing self-confidence of the Russians their policy might take, from our point of view, dangerous forms. Thus their determination to secure an oil concession in northern Iran³ was not merely due to a wish to ensure that the oil resources were properly exploited, but was probably part of a plan to reassert Russian influence in Iran. The Russian attitude towards events in Greece was 'correct' but the comments in the Russian press showed where their sympathy lay.

¹ Mr. Balfour was Minister in the British Embassy at Moscow from 1943 to 1945.

² Mr. Eden circulated this letter to the War Cabinet on March 12.

³ See Volume IV, Chapter LVIII, sections (i) and (ii).

(a) WP(45) 156.

We should be making a mistake if we put much store on our persuasive powers to change this deliberate policy. On the other hand we might also reckon that Stalin would not try to overreach the limits within which he could prudently exercise autocratic power. He was very proud, and quick to react against the slightest suggestion of Soviet inferiority or bad faith but he wanted to raise the status of the U.S.S.R. in the world. Hence he would pay attention to complaints from the Allies when—and only when—they could justly say that their legitimate interests were being disregarded.

On March 27, 1945, Sir A. Clark Kerr made what he called a (a) provisional assessment of Soviet policy since the Yalta Conference. He thought that, on the political side, the situation was 'disappointing and even disturbing'. He mentioned M. Molotov's decision not to attend the San Francisco Conference, and, in particular, the Soviet interpretation of the Yalta declarations on Liberated Europe and on Poland. The Russians had acted in Roumania in a manner entirely out of harmony with the former declaration, and had required us to accept and even to associate ourselves with their action. They knew that we were unlikely to make their treatment of Roumania a test case of their relations with the West, but they must be aware that we might well regard their attitude towards Poland as such a test. They had kept to their agreement about Yugoslavia, since this agreement merely confirmed a situation which was to their advantage. In general, in spite of our representations, they had been following a policy in the Balkans which was clearly based upon support for the Slav States of Bulgaria and Yugoslavia and upon compelling Roumania to act as they wished. They had now (March 19) denounced the Soviet-Turkish treaty of 1925¹ after a press campaign which had continued in spite of the Turkish declaration of war on Germany and Japan.

Even so Sir A. Clark Kerr did not think that the Soviet Government had given up the intention of collaborating with the Western Powers after the war. We had met with similar setbacks after the earlier three-Power meetings.² It seemed likely that the Russians came to these meetings 'to sniff the air, and to discover how far they can safely go in pushing Soviet interests in those parts of the world with which they are immediately concerned'. At Yalta they decided that—apart from Greece—they could do as they wished in the Balkans without fear of serious opposition. They would be tempted to take advantage of this opportunity, while we were still fighting Germany and the Red Army was in occupation of th

¹ See Volume IV, Chapter LII, section (iv).

² There had, in fact, been only one meeting—the Teheran Conference—before Yalta Conference which could properly be called a three-Power meeting.

(a) N3934/1545/38.

Balkans, to bring the social structure in the Balkan countries into harmony with that of the Soviet Union and to remove potentially hostile influences.

This policy, though distasteful to us, and leading us to general doubts about Russian intentions, was after all a policy of limited objectives none of which endangered our interests. In Greece, where they knew our interests to be at stake, the Russians had shown what was for them great moderation. Similarly they realised that they must consider our interests in Iran. As far as Poland was concerned, the Russians could not understand why we insisted on interfering in a matter when our direct interests were not involved. Even though our attitude was fundamentally different from theirs, we need not assume that their 'recalcitrance' over Poland would prevent the maintenance of a relationship with us considerably closer than that which existed between Great Britain and Tsarist Russia from 1907 to 1914. In their present mood of confidence in their own strength we must expect the Russians to pay little regard to us in matters directly affecting their own security, but they were likely later on to settle down to the business of collaboration with their major Allies, and especially with ourselves under the terms of the Anglo-Soviet treaty by which they set great store.

Meanwhile we need not be 'nice' in our approach to the Russians, though when we protested to them we must be sure that we were in the right. We ought to encourage in Great Britain franker criticism of Soviet policy and to put a stop to the 'gush of propaganda' eulogising not only the Soviet war effort but their whole 'system', since this propaganda merely made them believe that our attitude towards them was a complex of fear and inferiority. It was useless for us to argue with them over Roumania and Bulgaria; they would respect us the more, and put a higher value upon our co-operation if we stood up firmly for what they recognised to be our vital interests as in Greece, in Iran and Turkey. While they feared—as they must fear for some years to come—a possible revival of German aggression, and while they needed help in the heavy task of reconstruction, there was a solid basis for Anglo-Soviet co-operation.

We must indeed recognise that the word 'co-operation' like the word 'democracy', had different meanings in the Soviet Union and in the West. To the Russians it seemed to mean the acceptance of 'something like a division of the world into spheres of interest and a tacit agreement that no one of the partners will hamper or indeed criticise the activities of the other within its own sphere'. Our value as a partner would be judged by our strength and our readiness to stand up for our own rights and interests. We should therefore confine our quarrels with the Russians to issues on which we were prepared to stand our ground. Even so we should have to make

allowance for the unpredictable factor of Russian suspicions of us and our motives.

Sir A. Clark Kerr's conclusion was that we need not 'allow recent events to lead us to fear the worst'. We had never set more than 'sober hopes' on the Anglo-Soviet alliance or 'asked of it any of the intimacies or the close understanding that would dwell in a like commitment with the United States or even with France', but it would 'serve us well, and pay a steady, though not spectacular dividend'.

On April 25 Mr. Roberts wrote a letter supplementing, or rather (a) commenting on the conclusions in Sir A. Clark Kerr's despatch of March 27. He assumed there were many misgivings in the Foreign Office not only about Russian behaviour but also about Sir A. Clark Kerr's recommendation that we should now satisfy ourselves with what was 'admittedly only the second best in our relations with Russia'. We had worked so hard and so long to establish with Russia a relationship comparable with that between ourselves and the United States that it was 'very galling to be confronted with example after example of power politics in their crudest form'. Our reaction must be to see in post-war Russia a Power as dangerous potentially to us as Germany before 1939. The Russians themselves gave some justification for this theory when M. Maisky and Mme Kollontay maintained to us that Soviet Russia was in the same stage of historical development as England under Cromwell. The opposite reaction would be to dismiss our experiences since Yalta as a passing phase, and to assume that Russia would soon 'settle down'. Mr. Roberts regarded both these hypotheses as wrong. The second would be 'wishful thinking as long as Kremlin policy is controlled by the tough, tricky, and untrustworthy personalities who comprise the Politburo'. Furthermore the population of the Soviet Union were being encouraged to think in terms of past glories associated with the Russian exponents of power politics, and the Soviet State was run by orthodox Marxists whose political philosophy and practice differed totally from ours.

On the other hand M. Maisky was right in his statement that there was no essential conflict between Soviet Russia and the British Commonwealth; herein lay the real difference between our relationship with Germany before the war and with Russia today. Nevertheless we had to show the Russians that we were sufficiently strong and determined to defend our interests, and just as capable as they were of conducting a policy directed towards securing these interests. Above all we had to make it clear that there was a limit beyond which the Russians could not safely go. If we could also

(a) N4919/165/38.

show that the Western world under our guidance was able to resist Soviet pressure or infiltration, the Russians were likely to decide that their immediate interests would be served by co-operation with us and with the United States.

Russia was organising eastern Europe in her own way regardless of our wishes or prestige. We must expect for some time to come to be excluded—as far as the Russians could secure our exclusion—from Poland, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, and even from Yugoslavia. We ought therefore to ensure that our half of Europe remained the stronger half. The policy suggested by His Majesty's Embassy was thus not intended as a policy of despair, but as the best way of avoiding a sudden or gradual deterioration in Anglo-Soviet relations. One essential element in our change of approach must be the education of our own people; we ought to begin this process by putting a stop to the adulation of the Soviet Union which had been going on for the past three years and had misled the Russians (who did not reciprocate it) as well as our own people. Mr. Roberts added that the Russians might be genuinely alarmed at the dangerous anti-Russian talk in certain British military circles, more particularly in the Middle East.¹

Mr. Roberts considered it a remarkable fact that, within the previous two months, the Dominion representatives in Moscow, the United States Embassy, most British and American journalists, and even the French Embassy, had reached the same conclusions as the British Embassy that, while our long-term strategy should remain based upon the Anglo-Soviet alliance and upon the necessity for avoiding conflict between Russia and the West, our tactical approach should be modified to avoid possible misunderstanding of our strength, capacity, and determination to defend our interests and those of our friends.

- (a) Sir O. Sargent, in a memorandum of March 13, that is to say before Sir A. Clark Kerr's despatch had been received, put the case for accepting the Russian action in south-eastern Europe. He said that His Majesty's Government ought to decide upon policy towards the Communist and totalitarian Governments established in Roumania and Bulgaria. We had to assume a similar development in Hungary and Poland and, possibly to a lesser extent, in Yugoslavia. We had also to take into account the fundamental disagreement between ourselves and the Russians on the meaning of democracy and to remember that our form of parliamentary democracy with free elections, a free press, and freedom of discussion, had never

¹ Mr. Eden noted here: 'What is this? I had not heard of it.' See also Volume V, Chapter LXIV, section (iii).

(a) R5063/5063/67.

established itself in central and south-eastern Europe, except in Czechoslovakia. The population of these areas was now so much exhausted and impoverished—one might say 'proletarianised'—by the war that their one wish must be for secure and stable government even at the cost of political and private liberty. They were unlikely to fight for parliamentary institutions which in any case they had never learned to rely on or respect. We might obtain some mitigation of pure totalitarianism in Poland and Yugoslavia, but it seemed useless to try to secure free elections and properly representative governments elsewhere. If we insisted on trying to enforce our own principles, we should endanger our fundamental policy of post-war co-operation with the Soviet Union for an issue which was not vital to our interests in Europe. The Soviet Government seemed to be determined for political and strategic reasons to create out of the European countries on their own borders a *cordon sanitaire* against Germany; they would therefore require the local Governments of these border countries to be on totalitarian lines—irrespective of public opinion—in order to ensure that their foreign and military policies accorded with those of the U.S.S.R. Hence in attacking the régimes set up in Roumania and Bulgaria we were attacking, in the Soviet view, an essential part of the security system of the U.S.S.R. Sir O. Sargent thought we should have to accept the fact that Roumania and Bulgaria, and probably also Yugoslavia, would have totalitarian Governments, and that we should give up criticising and protesting against measures leading to the establishment of such governments and maintain normal relations with them 'no matter what their political colour . . . and their domestic policies may be'.

Nearly six weeks later another Foreign Office minute summed up (a) the position on similar lines. This minute pointed out that we had reached a deadlock in our negotiations with the Soviet Government over Roumania and Bulgaria. The facts were that in Roumania the Soviet Government had established a totalitarian régime during the last week of February and the first week of March. This régime—on the most generous estimate—did not represent more than 15 per cent of Roumanian opinion. We had informed the Soviet Government on February 24 that if they established such a Government we would dissociate ourselves publicly from it, but we did not do so. We encouraged the United States Government to support our representations. They invoked the Yalta Declaration on Liberated Territories, and asked for the consultation between the three Governments provided in the Declaration. We supported this request. The Soviet Government refused it. The request was repeated, and

(a) R7333/81/67.

again refused. The United States Government had recently informed us that they were renewing their request. We had promised our support, but the State Department had now said that they were holding up their *démarche* until they saw how the Polish negotiations were developing.

Our complaint with regard to Bulgaria was that the Soviet authorities in the country had done all they could to obstruct our Mission.¹ Our direct interest in Bulgaria was limited to the protection of a small number of British manufacturing concerns and the establishment of a certain amount of trade. We had similar but larger interests in Roumania, including the protection of important British oil companies. We had certain shipping interests in Roumania, and in both countries we were also under an obligation to look after all persons who had worked for us in the war and were now in danger of molestation by the Governments in power. We had no direct interest in the form of Government elected or imposed upon either country. We had recognised this position before Yalta and had agreed that Roumania and Bulgaria were within the Soviet sphere

- (a) ¹ One of the provisions of the armistice finally signed with Bulgaria was that during the period of military operations, i.e. until the end of the war with Germany, the British and American representatives should not take part in the decisions of the Allied Control Commission. British and American Military Missions, however, were to go to Bulgaria at once. The precise status of these Missions, and the facilities to be accorded to them, were not fixed. The failure to settle these questions gave the Soviet Government a pretext for refusing reasonable facilities to the Missions. The Soviet authorities claimed the right to determine the size of the Missions; they were unwilling to give adequate facilities for communications into and out of the country, or to provide sufficient Bulgarian currency for maintaining the Missions. They also restricted the freedom of movement of both Missions inside Bulgaria.

In view of the fact that Mr. Eden had conducted the negotiations for the armistice personally with M. Molotov, he sent on December 10, 1944, a message stating the British complaints. M. Molotov did not answer this message until January 3; his reply was then unsatisfactory. The Foreign Office did not continue the discussion for the time, since they wanted first to come to an agreement over the Control Commission for Hungary. Here—with the Bulgarian experience in mind—they held out for a more detailed and more satisfactory arrangement. On January 22, 1945, after this arrangement had been signed, they instructed Sir A. Clark Kerr to approach M. Molotov again and to ask that the arrangements now made for Hungary should apply also in the case of Bulgaria. M. Molotov refused. He argued that we already had the '20 per cent' share of influence agreed with the Prime Minister, and that we had been given a somewhat higher percentage than we were entitled to in Hungary.

- It was therefore useless to continue the exchange of messages. The Foreign Office therefore suggested on January 30 that the matter should be raised at the Yalta Conference. Mr. Eden gave M. Molotov a memorandum on the question at Yalta, but did not receive an answer. Sir A. Clark Kerr sent a reminder on April 2. Again the Russians failed to answer. The Foreign Office tried to get American support for another protest in Moscow, but the Americans were unwilling to act until they saw how the negotiations over Poland were developing. The Russians had meanwhile asked for a further reduction in the numbers of the British Mission.* Since the British Government had a right under the terms of the armistice to maintain this Mission, the Foreign Office—with the Prime Minister's approval—instructed General Oxley, the head of the Mission, to refuse any further reduction. The Foreign Office considered that, if the Russians insisted on their demand, the matter would have to be taken up directly with Stalin or M. Molotov.
- (b)

* The numbers had already been reduced from 160 to 73.

(a) R2184, 2185, 2351/81/67. (b) R7390/81/67.

of influence. At Yalta, however, we had promised in a public declaration that the former Axis satellites would be allowed to elect governments representing a majority of the electorate.

Soviet prestige was heavily involved in the maintenance of the Government which, in spite of our efforts, the Russians had imposed on Roumania. Most Roumanians were anti-Russian; a representative Government would therefore look to the west for support against the U.S.S.R. The Soviet Government could not allow anything of this kind, and must therefore maintain a minority Government which must in turn rely upon Russian backing. The Russians had most effective means of enforcing their will. Their troops were in the countries and exercised final control. An appeal to the Yalta Declaration would be of little use. The Declaration did not entitle us to ask for consultation between the three Governments as of right; the Soviet Government were likely to refuse our demand. Even if they agreed to consultation the result would be of no value. The Soviet Government could easily 'arrange' the elections in the countries, and would certainly not allow us to supervise them. If we did supervise them, and thereby secure fair results, we should assume the further responsibility of ensuring that the Governments elected were not overturned by forcible intervention or by another election conducted in the normal Balkan atmosphere of bribery and intimidation.

Our present policy of intervention in Roumania—and a similar disadvantage would apply to Bulgaria—was a serious source of disagreement with the Russians; our withdrawal would not damage our direct economic interests, and indeed might serve them, since the Russians would no longer have any reason for attacking them by way of a reprisal for our blocking their political interests. The Russians were also more likely to make concessions to our views about Poland and Yugoslavia if we did not oppose their plans in Roumania and Bulgaria.

In a second message of March 29 Sir A. Clark Kerr had raised (a) the question of British policy in relation to the Russian unwillingness to co-operate on the international organisations which the Western Allies were attempting to set up for dealing with European economic problems after the war. The Soviet Government appeared to be keeping clear of the proposed European Economic Committee,¹ just as they had refused co-operation with the European inland Transport Organisation, the Civil Aviation Conference and the United Maritime Authority. They clearly wanted to act by themselves in the areas where their influence was predominant. They did

¹ This committee was set up on May 28, without Russian participation.

(a) UE1397/17/53.

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not tell us of the measures which they had taken in those areas, e.g. the extensive requisitioning by the Red Army, the use of some factories to produce war material for themselves and the dismantling of other factories, even in Allied territories, the laying of broad gauge tracks¹ on Polish railways, or their trade agreement with Bulgaria.

We had first approached the Soviet Government on December 1, 1944, about the formation of a European Economic Committee. They did not agree until February 27, 1945, even to 'unofficial discussions of an exploratory nature'. They then gave their delegation instructions which prevented any real discussion. Sir A. Clark Kerr did not think that they would change their policy. They were determined to keep a free hand in their 'area' and probably regarded as a sign of weakness our inability to organise our 'area' without them. We ought to invite them to join the international committees, but we were making a mistake if we went on urging them to come in after they had shown their unwillingness to do so.

- (a) The Prime Minister's comment on this telegram was that it seemed 'most sensible'; he hoped that we should follow the policy suggested in it not only on the Economic Committee but on the European Advisory Commission—'the place for the Russians will be reserved, but if the seat is vacant, the business must go on'. The Prime Minister suggested at a meeting of the War Cabinet on April 3 that if the Russians—in view of the Anglo-American refusal to admit the Lublin Poles—refused to attend the San Francisco Conference, the Conference should nonetheless be held. Sir A.
- (b) Cadogan, in a minute of April 4, thought that the Russians would not in fact keep away from the Conference, but that, if they should do so, we could hardly draw up a successful plan for a World Organisation without them. On the other hand we could leave them out of certain international committees—e.g. the Transport Organisation whose work was purely local. We could not work without them on the European Advisory Commission, since the work of the latter related mostly to the administration of a quadruple occupation agreed between the four Powers. In a minute of April 9 Mr. Eden put this view to the Prime Minister. He added that he hoped that the problem would not arise with regard to the European Advisory Commission 'because that would portend a situation of ominous difficulty everywhere'. He pointed out that the Russians had resumed discussion in the European Advisory Commission and were proving 'reasonably collaborative'.

¹ i.e. to link them with the Russian railways.

(a) UE1556/17/53. (b) UE1556/17/53.

The Foreign Office replied to Sir A. Clark Kerr on April 20 that (a) Soviet participation was most desirable on certain bodies. Thus, in the case of the European Coal Organisation, two important coal-fields were in Czechoslovakia and Poland, and a third in the Russian zone of occupation in Germany. Similarly the Inland Transport Organisation could not work without Russian co-operation in a large part of Germany and Austria or in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Hungary, Bulgaria or Roumania. If the Russians did not participate in the European Economic Committee, the countries under their influence might also stand out, and thus prejudice the chances of getting any exportable surpluses from Eastern Europe.

Sir A. Clark Kerr had indeed already given his views on this question of exportable surpluses from eastern Europe. At the Yalta Conference Mr. Eden had circulated a proposal that officials of the three Governments should meet in Moscow to examine problems connected with the production and distribution of foodstuffs. Mr. Eden had approached the question of relief supplies in this way rather than by the question of supporting U.N.R.R.A. as an institution, since the Russians had shown signs of suspecting U.N.R.R.A. to be an Anglo-American device for the promotion of political (and perhaps more sinister) penetration into eastern and central Europe. The Russians had made no response to Mr. Eden's suggestion. The Foreign Office understood at the end of March that Mr. Harriman (b) had been asked to find out the Russian views. They therefore instructed Lord Halifax on the night of April 1 to discuss the matter with the State Department. The Foreign Office summed up the position as follows: (i) Shipping and supply considerations would limit the import of food into Europe before the end of the war against Japan. (ii) We and the Americans had done and would continue to do everything possible to assist in the import and distribution of supplies for north-west Europe, Italy and Greece. We could not take a similar responsibility in eastern Europe and the Balkans outside Greece. The Russians must at least say what they were willing to do. We should try to collaborate with them, but neither we nor the Americans could or would send supplies and ships to eastern Europe except as part of an agreed plan to which the Russians made their contribution. (iii) The Russians could not expect Germany to produce supplies on reparation account unless the industrial population were fed. In order to feed them it would be necessary to transfer surplus food from eastern Germany to the industrial areas of western Germany. Sir W. Strang had raised in

(a) UE1397/17/53. (b) U835, 1197/9/850.

1944 the question of such a transfer in a paper to the European Advisory Commission but no reply had come from the Russians. (iv) Austria would similarly have to draw supplies from the Danube basin.

Since in one respect at least the question of food was linked with that of reparation, we had in mind the possibility of attaching to the British Delegation to the Reparation Commission in Moscow one or two officials who could discuss with Russian officials the best way of increasing and distributing eastern European food supplies. We did not expect to get much from eastern Europe, but we could at least bring home to the Russians the seriousness of the problems involved and make it clear to them that they could not leave the problem of feeding central and eastern Europe to be solved entirely by U.N.R.R.A. with the assistance of Anglo-American supplies.

A copy of this telegram was sent to Sir A. Clark Kerr. In view of his telegram of March 29¹ about the Russians wishing to keep their hands free in 'their area', Sir A. Clark Kerr was informed that we did not expect them to be forthcoming about the proposed discussions. Nevertheless we should let them see that, if they wanted supplies for 'their area' from Anglo-American sources, they must reciprocate by distributing the surpluses available in parts of the area.

- (a) Sir A. Clark Kerr replied on April 12 that the Russians were interested only in schemes which were of practical benefit to themselves. There was little evidence that they had prepared plans for relief in eastern Europe. Their general behaviour in liberated and occupied countries did not suggest any thought for the future welfare of these countries. The Russians needed so much for themselves that their most likely response to an approach from us would be to present us with a list of their own requirements.

Sir A. Clark Kerr regarded it as unlikely that we should obtain any exportable surpluses from eastern Europe for some time to come. The Russians were unlikely to release supplies from areas under their control for the relief of the western and southern European Allies, and still less for western Germany. We should be wiser therefore to send food and goods from sources under our control to western Europe, Italy, Greece and other countries where we still had some influence. Anything left over might be needed to prevent starvation in western Germany and to enable the Germans to produce reparations.

Sir A. Clark Kerr considered it a matter for regret that we had to envisage such a division of Europe, but the Russians were unwilling

¹ See above, pp. 567-8.

(a) UR1112/9/850.

to treat the problem as a whole otherwise than on the basis that all help went from west to east. If we went on trying to persuade them to change their policy, we should merely make them think that we were helpless without their co-operation. If, on the other hand, we adopted a realistic policy of strengthening the areas under our own influence, we might have some hope of bringing the Russians to a more co-operative attitude of mind. They could hardly expect to retain contented populations in eastern Europe without western economic assistance. We might eventually be able to supply this assistance in our own way and on our own terms and thus restore our influence in eastern Europe.

Neither the Soviet Government nor the United States Government agreed with the British proposal to discuss the question of food supplies in connexion with reparation. Hence, on April 17, in the brief to the British Delegation to the San Francisco Conference, the (a) Foreign Office considered that we should probably have to accept, for purposes of relief and food supplies, the division of Europe into a Russian sphere and a Western sphere. We had already had to accept such a division in connexion with the European Economic Committee, and—so the brief concluded—this division might ‘prove to have far-reaching political implications’.

(ii)

The Prime Minister's proposal for a meeting of Heads of Governments: correspondence with President Truman over the proposal: the President's refusal of a preliminary meeting with the Prime Minister (April 16–May 23, 1945).

The Foreign Office estimate of Russian policy did not ignore, but, on the other hand, did not altogether face the question whether the Russians themselves might not have come to the conclusion that British ‘strength, capacity, and determination’ were insufficient to defend British interests, and that, in view of the evident wish of the Americans to commit themselves as little as possible to intervention in Europe, the balance of power would soon fall on the Russian side. If this were so, the Russians could trust to their own strength to ‘keep Germany down’, and had no need to concern themselves with British interests or to co-operate in the economic and social rehabilitation of Europe on lines suited to the Western Powers, but not necessarily to the advantage of Russian Communism.

(a) UR1197/9/850.

The Prime Minister was less inclined than the Foreign Office to take the view that the Russians had only limited objectives.¹ For this reason—and possibly also because he was more hopeful of the establishment of western democratic institutions in south-eastern Europe—he did not want to accept the extension of Russian control as an evil which could not be prevented. He too realised, however, that Great Britain could not prevent this control without American support, and that any effective resistance would have to be made quickly, that is to say, while Anglo-American military strength in Europe was at its maximum. The only chance of successful pressure on the Russians was therefore to hold a meeting of the three Heads of Government at once, and at this meeting to bring together all the questions at issue and to face the Russians with a threat that, if they failed to honour their agreements at Yalta, the Anglo-American armies would maintain their ground to the limit of their advance.²

The Prime Minister has written that he would have been prudent to have accepted Mr. Truman's invitation to him to come to Washington for the funeral of President Roosevelt.³ He might then have had an opportunity to put to the President his views about the gravity of the situation and the need for rapid action. It is doubtful whether he could have done more to persuade Mr. Truman in conversation than by letter. Mr. Truman intended, as far as possible, to continue the policy laid down by President Roosevelt. In spite of the latter's anger at Stalin's charges of secret Anglo-American

¹ There is, perhaps, a parallel between the Prime Minister's disillusion at the cynical attitude of the Russians to their promises at Yalta, and Mr. Chamberlain's attitude towards Hitler's breach of the Munich agreement.

² The Prime Minister had wanted earlier to secure a stronger political bargaining position with regard to Russia. He had therefore favoured a more direct advance on Berlin rather than the main thrust through Central Germany upon which General Eisenhower decided after crossing the Rhine and encircling the Ruhr. General Eisenhower's plan was to cut off the Germans from the industrial areas of Saxony and to prevent a withdrawal into the mountains of Bavaria and western Austria. General Eisenhower—without authorisation from the Combined Chiefs of Staff—informed Stalin of his plans on March 28. It was thus extremely difficult to change the plan. In any case the United States Chiefs of Staff strongly supported General Eisenhower's plan, and agreed with him that Berlin was no longer a particularly important objective. In mid-April the United States Chiefs of Staff again supported General Eisenhower's proposal not to advance his troops in central Germany across the Elbe. President Truman refused to consider the Prime Minister's view about the political consequences of these final (a) military objectives. His only reply to a long telegram from the Prime Minister of April 18 was to send him on April 23 the draft of a message to Stalin suggesting that the date and procedure of the withdrawal of the armies to their respective zones of occupation should be settled by mutual agreement between the three Governments.

One result of leaving General Eisenhower to take his decision without reference to political considerations was that, as a result of protests from the Soviet High Command against any American advance beyond the previously agreed line in Czechoslovakia, he halted his troops when he could easily have entered Prague. There were at the time no Soviet troops in Bohemia, and the Czechs who had begun a revolt in Prague were asking urgently for help. The Czechs therefore had to await the arrival of the Red Army.

³ Churchill, *Second World War*, VI, 418.

(a) T515/5, No. 7; T612/5, No. 9. Churchill Papers/1949.

negotiations with the Germans,¹ and disquiet at the Russian unwillingness to honour the Yalta agreements, President Roosevelt had been most anxious to avoid committing American forces to a long stay in Europe, or allowing them to be used in what he took to be solely British interests. He had regarded himself as more likely than Mr. Churchill to be able to influence the Russians, and wanted therefore to make it clear that he was following an independent, American policy and not merely supporting the policy of Great Britain.

Mr. Truman's way of dealing with business differed from that of Mr. Roosevelt, but he maintained, and even exaggerated the latter's desire to avoid the impression of an Anglo-American 'drive' against the Soviet Union. Thus, so far from accepting the Prime Minister's plan to negotiate a real, and not merely a verbal settlement with the Russians before it was too late, Mr. Truman actually delayed the meeting of the Heads of Government, and meanwhile attempted a unilateral approach to Stalin.

On April 16, Mr. Eden and Lord Halifax told Mr. Truman that (a) the Prime Minister hoped that the President would be able to pay a visit to London.² They mentioned that Mr. Roosevelt had intended to come to Great Britain. The Prime Minister repeated this invitation in a message of April 24 to Mr. Eden. Mr. Truman at this time seemed (b) to wish to accept the invitation, although, owing to pressure of business, he could not suggest a date or even say that he would come. (c) On the following day, in a telephone message to the Prime Minister (with reference to a peace approach from Himmler),³ the President said that he hoped to see the Prime Minister soon; Mr. Churchill answered that we were telegraphing proposals for a meeting, probably in London.

Stalin's unfriendly reply of April 24⁴ to the joint message from the Prime Minister and the President, and the confirmation of the arrest of the Polish leaders made the question of a tripartite meeting more urgent. The Prime Minister telegraphed to Mr. Eden on (d) May 4 that 'the Polish deadlock can now probably only be resolved at a conference between the three Heads of Governments in some unshattered town in Germany, if such can be found. This should

¹ See Volume V, Chapter LXVII, section (iii).

² Mr. Eden also spoke to Mr. Hopkins on April 15 in the same sense.

³ See Volume V, Chapter LXVII, section (iv).

⁴ See above, pp. 530-1.

(a) T504/5, Washington tel. 2579, Churchill Papers/356. (b) Tel. 4099 to Washington, Prisc. (c) WP(45)270. (d) T754/5, Tel. 321 to San Francisco, Churchill Papers/356. (e) Washington tel. 2572, Prisc.

take place at latest at the beginning of July. I propose to telegraph a suggestion to President Truman about his visit here and the further indispensable meeting of the three major Powers.'

- The uncompromising message from Stalin to the Prime Minister on May 5¹ about Poland only confirmed the latter's view that a tripartite meeting—to be preceded by a meeting in England between
- (a) himself and President Truman—was urgently necessary. He telegraphed to Mr. Eden on May 5: 'Nothing can save us from the great catastrophe but a meeting and a show-down as early as possible at some point in Germany which is under American and British control and affords reasonable accommodation.' The Prime Minister
- (b) repeated Stalin's message to the President on May 6, with the comment that 'it seems to me that matters can hardly be carried farther by correspondence, and that, as soon as possible, there should be a meeting of the three Heads of Governments. Meanwhile we should hold firmly to the existing position obtained or being obtained by our Armies in Yugoslavia, in Austria, in Czechoslovakia, on the main central United States front and on the British front reaching up to Lübeck including Denmark.' The armies would have enough to do during the next few days in collecting prisoners, and public opinion would be occupied with the victory celebrations. 'Thereafter . . . we must most earnestly consider our attitude towards the Soviets and show them how much we have to offer or withhold.'
- (c) On May 9 the Prime Minister suggested to Mr. Attlee and Mr. Eden that they should return at once to England, since their presence would be needed for a very difficult decision. The Prime Minister said that he intended within the next two days to make a definite proposal to President Truman for a visit to Great Britain. 'I shall propose that we go on from here to some small unshattered town in Germany . . . and there hold a prolonged discussion together and with U.J. I should hope this might occur before the end of June.'

The Prime Minister thought that the Polish problem might be

'easier to settle when set in relation to the now numerous outstanding questions of the utmost gravity which require urgent settlement with the Russians. I fear terrible things have happened during the Russian advance through Germany to the Elbe. The proposed withdrawal of the United States Army to the occupational lines which were arranged with the Russians and Americans in Quebec, and which were marked in yellow on the maps we studied there, would mean the tide of Russian domination sweeping forward 120 miles on a front of 300 or 400 miles. This would be an event which, if it occurred,

¹ See above, pp. 543-4.

(a) T771/5, Tel. 363 to San Francisco, Churchill Papers/356. (b) T793/5, No. 34 chill Papers/430/1; N5109/6/55). (c) T847/5, Tel. 525 to San Francisco, Churchill Papers/430/1

would be one of the most melancholy in history. After it was over and the territory occupied by the Russians, Poland would be completely engulfed and buried deep in Russian-occupied lands. What would in fact be the Russian frontier would run from the North Cape in Norway, along the Finnish-Swedish frontier, across the Baltic to a point just east of Lübeck, along the at present agreed line of occupation and along the frontier between Bavaria to Czechoslovakia to the frontiers of Austria, which is nominally to be in quadruple occupation, and half-way across that country to the Isonzo river, behind which Tito and Russia will claim everything to the east. Thus the territories under Russian control would include the Baltic Provinces, all of Germany to the occupational line, all Czechoslovakia, a large part of Austria, the whole of Yugoslavia, Hungary, Roumania, Bulgaria, until Greece in her present tottering condition is reached. It would include all the great capitals of Middle Europe including Berlin, Vienna, Budapest, Belgrade, Bucharest, and Sofia. The position of Turkey and Constantinople will certainly come immediately into discussion.

This constitutes an event in the history of Europe to which there has been no parallel, and which has not been faced by the Allies in their long and hazardous struggle. The Russian demands on Germany for reparations alone will be such as to enable her to prolong the occupation almost indefinitely, at any rate for many years during which time Poland will sink with many other States into the vast zone of Russian-controlled Europe, not necessarily economically Sovietised but police-governed.

It is just about time that these formidable issues were examined between the principal Powers as a whole. We have several powerful bargaining counters on our side, the use of which might make for a peaceful agreement. First, the Allies ought not to retreat from their present positions to the occupational line until we are satisfied about Poland and also about the temporary character of the Russian occupation of Germany, and the conditions to be established in the Russianised or Russian-controlled countries in the Danube valley particularly Hungary, Austria and Czechoslovakia, and the Balkans. Secondly, we may be able to please them about the exits from the Black Sea and the Baltic as part of a general settlement. All these matters can only be settled before the United States Armies in Europe are weakened. If they are not settled before the United States Armies withdraw from Europe, and the Western World folds up its war machines, there are no prospects of a satisfactory solution and very little of preventing a third World War. It is to this early and speedy show-down and settlement with Russia that we must now turn our hopes. Meanwhile I am against weakening our claim against Russia on behalf of Poland in any way. I think it should stand where it was put in the telegrams from the President and me.'

Mr. Eden replied to the Prime Minister on the night of May 9-10 (a)

(a) San Francisco tel. 210, Prisec.

- that Mr. Truman was likely to come to San Francisco for the final stages of the Conference. This plan would not conflict with the Prime Minister's proposal for a tripartite meeting in June. Mr. Truman himself telegraphed to the Prime Minister on May 9 that
- (a) he agreed on the desirability of holding such a meeting, but would prefer the initiative to come from Stalin. Mr. Truman asked whether the Prime Minister had any means of inducing Stalin to propose a meeting. He said that it would be difficult for him to leave Washington before the end of the United States financial year (June 30) but that he could probably leave after that date. Meanwhile he intended to adhere to the Anglo-American interpretation of the Yalta agreements and to stand firmly on the attitude which the two Governments had taken on all the questions at issue.
- (b) The Prime Minister answered on May 11 that, in his view, he and the President should invite Stalin to meet them in July at 'some unshattered town in Germany' outside the Russian military zone. 'Twice running we have come to meet him. They are concerned about us on account of our civilisation and various instrumentalities. But this will be greatly diminished when our armies are dispersed.'

The Prime Minister did not know the date of the British general election, but saw no reason why it should affect his or the President's movements 'where public duty calls'. If the President would come to England early in July, His Majesty The King would send him a cordial invitation, and he (the President) would have a great reception from the British nation. The Prime Minister would have suggested June but for the President's reference to the fiscal year because he felt that every moment counted. After the President's visit to England, he and the Prime Minister might go to the rendezvous in Germany for 'the grave discussions on which the immediate future of the world depends'.¹ The Prime Minister would bring with him representatives of both British parties; these representatives would use the same language since they were closely agreed. Meantime the Prime Minister hoped earnestly that the American front would not recede 'from the now agreed tactical lines'. He doubted very much whether any enticements would 'get a proposal for a tripartite meeting out of Stalin', but he would probably 'respond to an invitation. If not, what are we to do?'

President Truman replied that he would 'much prefer to have

¹ The Prime Minister repeated this view at the end of his message, when he expressed satisfaction at Mr. Truman's intention to stand firmly on the Yalta agreements. 'Mr. President, in these next two months the gravest matters in the world will be decided. May I add that I have derived a great feeling of confidence from the correspondence we have interchanged.'

(a) T853/5 No. 31 (Churchill Papers/430/1; N5299/6/55).
(Churchill Papers/430/1; U3628/3628/70).

(b) T876/5, No. 40

Stalin propose the meeting, and that it was worth while trying to (a) get him to do so'. If we failed, we could then consider issuing an invitation 'jointly or severally'. If such a meeting were arranged, President Truman thought that 'in order to avoid any suspicion of "ganging up"', he and Mr. Churchill should go separately to the place of meeting. After the meeting, if his duties made it possible, Mr. Truman would be 'very pleased to make a visit to England'. He was 'fully in agreement that the next few months will decide questions of the greatest consequence to the whole world'.

The Prime Minister realised that this telegram meant a change of plan on the part of the President. He therefore sent him a message (b) on May 13 reminding him that Mr. Roosevelt had promised to visit England 'before he went to France—or, as it has now become, Germany'. The Prime Minister, however, wanted the tripartite conference to take place 'as soon as possible and wherever possible'; he suggested some time in June, and hoped that the United States fiscal year would not delay it. The Prime Minister agreed that the British and American Ambassadors in Moscow should do their utmost to induce Stalin to propose the meeting; they were, however, unlikely to succeed. 'Time is on his side if he digs in while we melt away.'

On the previous day the Prime Minister had sent a longer telegram to the President about this latter point: (c)

'I am profoundly concerned about the European situation. . . . I learn that half the American Air Force in Europe has already begun to move to the Pacific theatre. The newspapers are full of the great movements of the American armies out of Europe. Our armies also are, under previous arrangements, likely to undergo a marked reduction. The Canadian Army will certainly leave. The French are weak and difficult to deal with. Anyone can see that in a very short space of time our armed power on the Continent will have vanished, except for moderate forces to hold down Germany.

Meanwhile what is to happen about Russia? I have always worked for friendship with Russia, but, like you, I feel deep anxiety because of their misinterpretation of the Yalta decisions, their attitude towards Poland, their overwhelming influence in the Balkans excepting Greece, the difficulties they make about Vienna, the combination of Russian power and the territories under their control or occupied, coupled with the Communist technique in so many other countries, and above all their power to maintain very large armies in the field for a long time. What will be the position in a year or two, when the British and American Armies have melted and the

(a) T898/5, No. 36, Churchill Papers/430/1. (b) T904/5, No. 46, Churchill Papers/430/1. (c) T895/5, No. 44, Churchill Papers/495.

French has not yet been formed on any major scale, when we may have a handful of divisions, mostly French, and when Russia may choose to keep two or three hundred on active service?

An iron curtain is drawn down upon their front. We do not know what is going on behind. There seems little doubt that the whole of the regions east of the line Lübeck-Trieste-Corfu will soon be completely in their hands. To this must be added the further enormous area conquered by the American armies between Eisenach and the Elbe, which will I suppose in a few weeks be occupied, when the Americans retreat, by the Russian power. All kinds of arrangements will have to be made by General Eisenhower to prevent another immense flight of the German population westward as this enormous Muscovite advance into the centre of Europe takes place. And then the curtain will descend again to a very large extent, if not entirely. Thus a broad band of many hundreds of miles of Russian-occupied territory will isolate us from Poland.

Meanwhile the attention of our peoples will be occupied in inflicting severities upon Germany, which is ruined and prostrate, and it would be open to the Russians in a very short time to advance if they chose to the waters of the North Sea and the Atlantic.

Surely it is vital now to come to an understanding with Russia, or see where we are with her, before we weaken our armies mortally or retire to the zones of occupation. This can only be done by a personal meeting. I should be most grateful for your opinion and advice. Of course we may take the view that Russia will behave impeccably, and no doubt that offers the most convenient solution. To sum up, this issue of a settlement with Russia before our strength has gone seems to me to dwarf all others.'

- The President replied on May 14 that he was unable to conjecture
- (a) what the Russians might do when Germany was 'under the small forces of occupation, and the great part of such armies as we can maintain are fighting in the Orient against Japan'. He was in full agreement that an early tripartite meeting was necessary in order to come to an understanding with Russia.¹ The Prime Minister
 - (b) answered on May 15 that he would 'take a chance of getting a snub from Stalin by sending him a telegram urging a friendly tripartite meeting'. On May 16 Lord Halifax reported that the President's

¹ The President told Mr. Attlee and Mr. Eden on May 14 that he could not leave Washington before July 1. In reporting this conversation Mr. Eden said he intended at their next conversation to ask the President what he meant by 'trying to induce Stalin to make the first move' for a meeting. Mr. Eden telegraphed on May 16 that the President had in mind that whichever of the two Ambassadors first returned to Moscow should raise with Stalin the question of a meeting. The President would be satisfied with an indication from Stalin that he favoured the proposal.

(a) T925/5, No. 39 (Churchill Papers/430/1; U3701/3628/70). (b) T927/5, No. 50, Churchill Papers/430/1. (c) T934/5 (Churchill Papers/430/1; N5503/6/55). (d) T949/5, Churchill Papers/430/1; Washington tel. 3385, Prisecc.

advisers were coming to the view that the meeting should be held (a) earlier than July 1 and that the President need not stay in Washington for the end of the fiscal year. They were also in favour of arrangements for a preliminary discussion between the Prime Minister and the President.

The Prime Minister telegraphed on May 21 that the need for a (b) tripartite meeting at the earliest possible moment was very great. There would probably be a general election campaign in England during June but since all parties were agreed on foreign policy there was no need to postpone the meeting. The Prime Minister asked for the President's views on the date and place of the meeting so that we and the Americans could 'make our several requests to Stalin. I have a fear he may play for time in order to remain all powerful in Europe when our forces have melted.'

On May 21 the President telegraphed that he hoped to have (c) more information within the next fortnight about the date and place of a tripartite meeting. He hoped that Stalin would come 'west into Germany or further west', but he had been 'advised that he is not likely to go beyond Soviet-controlled territory'.

The Prime Minister, however, was able to take the opportunity of a message from Stalin on May 23 about the German fleet to raise the question of a meeting. The Prime Minister, in a reply of May 26, referred to the general discussions which 'ought to take place (d) between us and President Truman at the earliest possible date'.

(iii)

President Truman's decision to send Mr. Hopkins on a special mission to Moscow: Mr. Davies's visit to London: the Prime Minister's rejection of President Truman's proposal for a preliminary Russo-American meeting: Stalin's agreement to a tripartite meeting (May 23-June 7, 1945).

One reason why the Prime Minister, in his message to Stalin, made this direct reference to a tripartite meeting was that President Truman had decided a few days earlier upon action of his own to try to break the deadlock with the Russians, especially on the Polish question. The President was following President Roosevelt's method of acting outside the ordinary diplomatic channel, and had sent Mr. Harry Hopkins on a special mission to Moscow.¹ There is no indication on the British side that Mr. Truman even considered whether this move would go far beyond relieving the Russians of any suspicion that the Western Powers were 'ganging up' against

¹ See also above, pp. 546-51.

(a) Washington tel. 3394, Prisc. (b) T982/5, No. 53, Churchill Papers/495.
(c) T983/5, No. 45 (Churchill Papers/430/1; N5611/165,33). (d) Tel. 2891 to Moscow, Prisc.; T1007/5, Churchill to Truman No. 56, Churchill Papers/473.

them; the obvious conclusion which the Russians would draw from the mission was that the United States Government were much less willing than the British Government to take a firm stand. Hence by their usual lavishness in verbal concessions the Russians could separate the two Governments.¹

- The President had taken his decision without consulting the British Government. Lord Halifax reported on May 23 that he had been told privately of Mr. Hopkins's mission. He assumed that the
- (a) Prime Minister knew of it. In a later telegram Lord Halifax gave as probable 'background reasons' for the mission the acute nervousness in official circles and the public generally in the United States over the growing signs of difficulties with the Soviet Union. The question was being asked whether Mr. Roosevelt's 'grand design' was not fading out owing to lack of initiative. The possibility of a visit to Moscow by Mr. Hopkins, who was regarded as 'the most eminent living repository' of Mr. Roosevelt's policy, had been talked about vaguely for some time, but the decision seemed to have been taken abruptly, and was doubtless hastened by the belief that the general election in Great Britain would delay a three-Power meeting, and that something must be done meanwhile 'to keep the Samovar from boiling over'.

The President appeared to have viewed his action in some measure as a kind of mediation between Great Britain and Russia. At all events he sent Mr. Joseph E. Davies² to London at the same time as Mr. Hopkins went to Moscow. Mr. Davies's business was to discuss matters before the Conference which Mr. Hopkins was instructed to suggest to Stalin. Mr. Davies saw the Prime Minister on the

¹ See also above, pp. 546-48.

² Mr. Davies, who had been United States Ambassador to the Soviet Union in 1936-8, was a strong supporter of Russo-American collaboration. According to Admiral Leahy Mr. Davies was startled at the vehemence with which the Prime Minister spoke of the danger of Communist domination in Europe, and at his unwillingness to accept Soviet promises of good faith. In his written report to the President Mr. Davies included an extraordinary comment by himself to the Prime Minister that he 'wondered whether he, the Prime Minister, was now willing to declare to the world that he and Britain had made a mistake in not supporting Hitler, for, as I understood him, he was now expressing the doctrine which Hitler and Goebbels had been proclaiming and reiterating for the past four years in an effort to break up Allied unity and "divide and conquer".'

Mr. Davies reported that the Prime Minister was tired, and working under great stress. He thought him 'basically more concerned over preserving England's position in Europe than in preserving peace'. Mr. Davies believed that the Russians knew, or at least suspected the Prime Minister's bitter hostility towards them, and that their knowledge was 'responsible for much of the aggressiveness and unilateral action on the part of the Soviets since Yalta'. Admiral Leahy himself inferred that the Prime Minister wanted to keep the United States army in Europe because he saw in its presence 'a hope of sustaining Britain's vanishing position in Europe'.

It is of interest in regard to the Prime Minister's attitude towards the Russian control of the 'liberated' countries that Mr. Davies reported him as saying that he regarded 'the imposition of secret police and Gestapo methods in the reoccupied areas as more horrible than Communism itself'. (Admiral Leahy, *I Was There* (Gollancz, 1950), 441-5).

(a) N6189/165/38.

night of May 26–7. He told him that Mr. Hopkins was instructed to propose to Stalin a tripartite meeting; he also explained that the procedure which the President had in mind was a meeting between Stalin and himself to which British representatives would be invited a few days later.

There is no report from Washington in the British archives to show why the President or any of his advisers could have expected the Prime Minister to accept a proposal of this kind. The Prime Minister of course refused it. He sent to Mr. Eden on the morning of May 28 the draft of a note of reply which he proposed to give to Mr. Davies. 'If he desires to carry it back to Washington himself as a great honour, he may be allowed to do so. I have not formed the best opinion of this man. A day or two's delay in his return does not matter as he proposes to fly direct.' Meanwhile a copy of the message should be sent as a personal and private communication from Mr. Churchill to Mr. Hopkins in Moscow, 'in order that he may know exactly where we stand'.¹ If Mr. Davies made any trouble about taking the message, it should be sent as one of Mr. Churchill's messages to Mr. Truman with the prefix: 'I venture to put before you the note I have myself prepared as a result of the message from you delivered to me by Mr. Davies with whom I have had the most agreeable personal contact.'

Mr. Eden agreed with the note, and with the Prime Minister's minute, but suggested that he should sound Mr. Davies on its lines at lunch on May 28.² Mr. Churchill then drafted a message to Mr. Truman, but later on May 28 (or May 29) toned it down slightly. In its final form the message stated that it was imperative to hold a conference of the three major powers at the earliest possible date. He was prepared to attend on any date at any place. He regretted that London had not been chosen. He had paid many visits to Moscow and to Washington and the last meeting at Yalta had been held on Russian soil.

'London, the greatest city in the world, the capital of the nation which first entered the war against Germany and very heavily battered during the conflict, is the natural appropriate place for the Victory meeting of the three Great Powers. It is also midway. However, if this is not possible, His Majesty's Government will come to Berlin as suggested by Premier Stalin³ because the urgency of the

¹ In view of Mr. Churchill's later decision not to send the message (see below, p. 583), the copy does not appear to have been sent to Moscow.

² For Mr. Davies's report to Mr. Truman of this meeting, see *F.R.U.S., Berlin Conference 1945*, I, 64–81.

³ The original draft read: 'If this is refused, His Majesty's Government will come to Berlin as suggested.'

(a) PMM529/5, Churchill Papers/430/1.

meeting precludes lengthy discussions on matters of national sentiment.'

The Prime Minister continued:

'I received with some surprise the suggestion . . . that a meeting between yourself and Premier Stalin should take place at some agreed place and that the representatives of His Majesty's Government should be invited to join a few days later. The representatives¹ of His Majesty's Government would not be able to attend any meeting held at this juncture except as equal partners from its opening. I understood from President Roosevelt that he intended to visit Britain about this time² and would remain here for a few days before going to the Continent. It has been a serious disappointment to us that you have not found it possible to entertain such a project, but I quite see that Russian suspicions might be aroused if we appeared to arrive at the meeting place on the basis of a dual understanding. I agreed therefore that we should make our way to the meeting place separately. All the more is it painful to me that it should now be proposed that formal meetings should take place between the United States and Russia in advance of the Three Powers meeting. . . .

Moreover I do not see that there is any need to raise the issue.³ Meetings like Teheran and Yalta always require two or three days of preliminary discussions, when the Agenda is framed and when complimentary contacts are made between the three Heads of States. In such circumstances all three Great Powers are obviously free to make what contacts they wish and when they please.'

The Prime Minister realised that the President wished to make the acquaintance of Stalin; he (the Prime Minister) had been hoping to meet Mr. Truman and to have some talks with him before the general sessions of the conference. His experience was that the principals at a conference met 'how they like, when they like, and for as long as they like, and discuss any questions that they may consider desirable . . . these matters work out quite easily on the spot'.

The Prime Minister said that it would be more convenient for him if the meeting were to take place after July 5, i.e. the date of the British general election, but he thought it much more important that the meeting should be held at the earliest possible moment, and 'before the United States Forces in Europe are to a large extent dissolved'. He repeated his suggestion that the date should be as

¹ The original draft read: 'It must be understood that the representatives . . .'

² The original draft included here the words: 'in accordance with the King's invitation.'

³ The original draft here read: 'an issue so wounding to Britain, to the British Empire and Commonwealth of Nations and to the Army of more than a million men who have marched at your side across France and Germany.'

early as June 15, and accepted Berlin 'on the understanding that the three Major Powers shall meet there simultaneously'.

Meanwhile, however, Stalin, in reply to the Prime Minister's message of May 26, had replied on May 27 that Mr. Harriman had (a) arrived in Moscow and had raised on behalf of the President the question of a meeting in the very near future. Stalin agreed, and suggested the environs of Berlin as a meeting place. The Prime Minister replied on May 29 that he would be 'very glad' to meet (b) Stalin and the President 'in what is left of Berlin in the very near future'; he hoped that the meeting might take place about the middle of June. On May 28 President Truman had telegraphed to (c) the Prime Minister Stalin's proposal that the meeting should be held in the Berlin area. On May 29 the President sent another message that he was now studying a possible date for the three-party (d) meeting, and would telegraph again in the near future. The Prime Minister took President Truman's message of May 29 to mean that (e) he had 'receded from the two-party beginning'. The Prime Minister therefore decided on May 30 to keep his 'telegram of protest for the moment, as the thing may do itself'.¹

¹ The draft telegram contained a fairly full statement of British policy towards the expansionist demands of Russia and also a clear indication that the Prime Minister did not regard the relationship between the United States and Soviet Russia as similar in nature to American relations with Great Britain.

'It must be remembered that Britain and the United States are united at this time upon the same ideologies, namely, freedom, and the principles set out in the American Constitution and reproduced with modern variations in the Atlantic Charter. The Soviet Government have a different philosophy, namely Communism, and use to the full the methods of police government, which they are applying in every State which has fallen a victim to their liberating arms. The Prime Minister cannot readily bring himself to accept the idea that the position of the United States is that Britain and Soviet Russia are just two foreign Powers, six of one and half a dozen of the other, with whom the troubles of the late war have to be adjusted. Except in so far as force is concerned, there is not equality between right and wrong. The great causes and principles for which Britain and the United States have suffered and triumphed are not mere matters of the balance of power. They in fact involve the salvation of the world. (f)

The Prime Minister has for many years now gone by striven night and day to obtain a real friendship between the peoples of Russia and those of Great Britain, and, as far as he was entitled to do so, of the United States. It is his resolve to persevere against the greatest difficulties on this endeavour. He does not by any means despair of a happy solution conferring great advantages upon Soviet Russia, and at the same time securing the sovereign independence and domestic liberties of the many States and nations which have now been overrun by the Red Army. The freedom, independence, and sovereignty of Poland was a matter for which the British people went to war, ill-prepared as they were. It has now become a matter of honour with the nation and Empire, which is now better armed. The rights of Czechoslovakia are very dear to the hearts of the British people. The position of the Magyars in Hungary has been maintained over many centuries and many misfortunes, and must ever be regarded as a precious European entity. Its submergence in the Russian flood could not fail to be either the source of future conflicts or the scene of a national obliteration horrifying to every generous heart. Austria, with its culture and its historic capital of Vienna, ought to be a free centre for the life and progress of middle Europe.

(continued on page 584)

(a) T1012/5, Churchill Papers/430/1. (b) T1016/5, Churchill Papers/430/1. (c) T1015/5, No. 48, Churchill Papers/473. (d) T1023/5, No. 49, Churchill Papers/430/1. (e) PMM 538/5, Churchill Papers/430/1. (f) PMM529/5, Churchill Papers/430/1.

- (a) On May 31 the Prime Minister telegraphed to the President that he would be glad to know the date which he proposed for the conference. He also said:

'I had agreeable talks with Mr. Davies, which he will report to you when he returns. I may say, however, at once that I should not be prepared to attend a meeting which was a continuation of a conference between you and Marshal Stalin. I consider that at this Victory meeting, at which subjects of the gravest consequence are to be discussed, we three should meet simultaneously and on equal terms. There are always plenty of opportunities for private discussion between the Heads of Governments at these meetings while the preliminaries are being arranged and the agenda fixed. I am also hoping to have the pleasure of meeting you for the first time.'

- Both the President and Stalin wanted July 15 as the date, and President Truman also appeared to have given up his idea of a preliminary meeting between Stalin and himself. The Prime Minister, however, was still concerned over the delay in holding the conference, and over signs that the Americans failed to realise the importance of taking a firm line with the Russians. In a telegram (b) of June 4 about the Polish situation¹ the Prime Minister referred to his wish for an earlier date for the conference:

'I view with profound misgivings the retreat of the American Army to our line of occupation in the central sector, thus bringing Soviet power into the heart of Europe and the descent of an iron curtain between us and everything to the Eastward. I hoped that this retreat, if it has to be made, would be accompanied by the settlement of many great things which would be the true foundation of world peace. Nothing really important has been settled yet and you and I will have to bear great responsibility for the future. I still hope that the date will be advanced. However, if this cannot be, I accept July 15. In either case it would be necessary to bring with me Mr. Attlee, the Leader of the Socialist Party in Great Britain. He is, as you know, in full agreement at the present time with our foreign policy, but the United States and Soviet Russia have a right to know that they

(continued)

The Balkan countries, which are the survivors of so many centuries of war, have built up hard civilisations of their own. Yugoslavia is at present dominated by the Communist-trained leader Tito, whose power had been mainly gained by the advances of the British and American armies in Italy. Roumania and Bulgaria are largely swamped by the fact of their proximity to Soviet Russia and their having taken the wrong side in several wars. Nevertheless these countries have a right to live. As for Greece, by hard fighting by Greeks and by the British Army the right has been obtained for the Greek people to express at an early approaching election, without fear of obstruction, on the basis of universal suffrage and secret ballot, their free, unfettered choice alike of régime and Government.'

¹ See also above, pp. 548-9.

(a) T1027/5, No. 60, Churchill Papers/430/1. (b) T1060/5, No. 72, Churchill Papers/430/1.

are dealing with the whole of Britain, whatever our immediate Party future may be.¹

On June 7 President Truman—who had seen Mr. Davies—(a) telegraphed that he could 'readily understand' the Prime Minister's position with regard to 'the simultaneous character of the first meeting', and that he gladly concurred with it.

(iv)

Mr. Eden's memorandum of May 3 to M. Molotov: the Soviet reply of May 12: British attitude towards the conclusion of peace treaties with Bulgaria, Hungary and Roumania: American unwillingness to raise the question with the Soviet Government before the tripartite conference (May 3–July 9, 1945).

During the critical weeks while the Prime Minister was trying to get the support of President Truman for an early meeting with the Russians, the Foreign Office had to decide upon an immediate line of policy towards the Russian unilateral action in south-eastern Europe. Mr. Eden on May 3 had given M. Molotov a memorandum (b) on the general question of Anglo-Soviet relations. He said in this memorandum that in recent months much avoidable misunderstanding had been caused by actions of the Soviet Government and that there were widespread misgivings in Great Britain about Soviet policy. Mr. Eden mentioned, in addition to the Soviet unwillingness to supply information about the missing Polish leaders, (i) the refusal to accord full facilities for British officers to visit places where British prisoners of war had been concentrated, (ii) the restrictions upon the movement of the British military mission in Bulgaria, (iii) the delay in allowing the British diplomatic mission to enter Czechoslovakia, (iv) the failure of the Soviet authorities to allow British representatives to go to Vienna at once after the entry of the Soviet troops in accordance with the general understanding that the principal Allies had a joint interest in Austria and were all to participate in the occupation of the country. Mr. Eden added that the misgivings about Austria were increased when the establishment of a Provisional Government under Dr. Renner was announced² before the British Government had been given an opportunity to

¹ The Prime Minister added: 'You can imagine what a blow it is to me to have Eden aid up at this moment.' See p. 548, note 1.

² This announcement was made from Moscow on April 29. Marshal Tolbukhin, the Russian commander-in-chief in Austria, was said to have 'recognised' the Government. Dr. Renner's Government, which had, obviously, no legal status, was composed largely of Communists and Social Democrats. Neither the British nor the United States Government recognised it.

(a) T1089/5, No. 62, Churchill Papers/430/1. (b) N4996.6/55.

express their views on the matter. Since these developments in Austria followed on the conclusion by the Soviet Government of a treaty with the Provisional Government at Warsaw, the impression was reinforced that Soviet policy was being conducted without consultation with the other principal Allies or due regard for their legitimate interests, and was not in harmony with the declarations made in common by the three Great Powers.

- The general effect of this memorandum was somewhat lost in the particular crisis over the missing Poles, but on May 12, 1945, the
- (a) Soviet Ambassador in Washington gave Mr. Eden a memorandum in reply. The reply described the British memorandum as biased and one-sided, and unlikely to assist in the development of a friendly mutual understanding. The reply then repeated a number of allegations about the treatment of Soviet prisoners of war in British hands, and said that the Soviet Government had already given Mr. Eden the necessary explanations on the question of the Polish leaders and the British diplomatic mission to Czechoslovakia, that restrictions had to be imposed on the movement of foreigners while Bulgaria was a forward base of the Soviet army, but that with the cessation of military operations the question of the freedom of movement of British representatives in Bulgarian territory would be settled 'in a way desired by the British Government', and that a 'settlement of the question of the Government in Austria' would also present no difficulties.

- Mr. Eden decided not to continue the general correspondence
- (b) with M. Molotov, but thought that a detailed reply should be made in strong terms to the charges about Soviet prisoners of war. This reply was sent on May 31 to Lord Halifax for transmission to the
- (c) Soviet Ambassador in Washington. Lord Halifax suggested, however, on June 3, that in view of the more favourable general atmosphere of Anglo-American-Russian relations following Mr. Hopkins's mission to Moscow, it might be better to defer the delivery of the reply. The Foreign Office telegraphed to Lord Halifax on June 7 that they would be willing to tone down some of the words or phrases in their answer but that we had found it essential not to leave unanswered the baseless charges about our treatment of Soviet prisoners of war. Moreover the slight improvement in Anglo-Soviet relations was still no more than a 'modest change of atmosphere' and had not yet produced any practical results. It might well be, as so often before, merely a temporary manoeuvre to put us off our guard. If, on the other hand, it was sincere, it should not suffer from our refutation of insulting charges which the Soviet Government

(a) N53552/16/538. (b) N5562, 5846/165/38. (c) N6366, 165/38.

themselves knew to be untrue. The reply was therefore sent to the Soviet Ambassador on June 12.¹ (a)

On May 15 the State Department asked for the views of the Foreign Office on the future of the Control Commissions in Roumania and Bulgaria.² They pointed out that, with the end of the German war, we had reached the stage at which our representatives on the Commissions were to be taken more fully into participation. The State Department seemed to think that as it was increasingly embarrassing for them and for us that we should be associated with Soviet action of which we disapproved, we might find it better to withdraw our representatives. (b)

Mr. Eden summarised the Foreign Office view in a note to the Prime Minister on May 25. Mr. Eden said that our aim in Roumania, Bulgaria, and Hungary was to secure their evacuation by the Red Army, and the establishment of independent Governments. The Soviet Government were disregarding our views by setting up (c)

¹ In a minute of May 2, 1945, Sir O. Sargent suggested that the 'hardening' of the Soviet attitude towards Great Britain on so many outstanding questions might be due to the influence of the victorious Soviet Marshals. Hitherto we had found that Stalin tended to take a broad and statesmanlike line on matters put to him directly. Thus he was personally responsible for the decision to send M. Molotov to San Francisco, and for the invitation conveyed to Mr. Harriman for the Allied representatives to visit Vienna in order to settle matters on the spot. Similarly Stalin's attitude over the Polish question both at Moscow in the autumn of 1944 and at Yalta was 'comparatively co-operative', though M. Molotov was more obstructive. In each case there had been a subsequent hardening, 'due apparently to some mysterious influence'. This might come either from the party bosses or from the Soviet generals. (d)

In the cases of Poland and Austria it was tempting to connect the change of attitude with the victorious generals who were overrunning these countries and insisting that they would not allow British or American interference or the establishment of local governments not completely under their control. Such a hypothesis would also explain the intolerable behaviour of the Soviet authorities to our Missions in Bulgaria and Roumania, and their refusal to allow our Mission to enter Czechoslovakia.

We knew very little of the nature of Stalin's relations with his generals. It was possible that he now had to handle them with more circumspection than was previously necessary. If so, we ought to try to work directly on the Marshals. We could do so only through our own and the American generals.

The Prime Minister answered that he agreed with this minute. He asked what practical measures Sir O. Sargent would propose. He said that he would be willing to telegraph to General Eisenhower or Field-Marshal Montgomery. Sir O. Sargent in reply did not suggest any special instructions, but thought that the Prime Minister should inform the Chiefs of Staff that there seemed to be influences in Russia—possibly the Marshals—working independently of Stalin, and that British Field-M Marshals and Generals who came in contact with Russian Marshals should take special care to establish friendly and confident relations with them. The Prime Minister might also inform President Truman of his action and ask General Eisenhower and Field-Marshal Montgomery to tell us all they could about the Marshals with whom they and their staff came into contact.

The Prime Minister replied on May 16 that the matter was a delicate one, but that he would talk about it to General Eisenhower and Field-Marshal Montgomery whom he was seeing on that day. He added: 'If you come to any private arrangement with some Russian general, you may not find him there next time an appointment is made.'

The Prime Minister had no opportunity to discuss the subject with General Eisenhower or Field-Marshal Montgomery, and no further action was taken in the matter.

² See above, Chapters XXXVIII, section (v) and XLVI, section (i).

(a) N7207/165/38. (b) R9256/81/67. (c) P.M.45/202 (R9256/81/67).
(d) N5017/165/38.

minority governments in Roumania and Bulgaria and by trying to prevent our own and the American Missions from taking any part in the formulation of policy or in supervising the execution of the Armistice agreements. The United States Government, with our support, had invoked the Yalta Declaration on liberated territories in an attempt to secure genuine democratic government in Roumania and Bulgaria, but the Russians had refused to admit the applicability of the declaration in existing circumstances. A further appeal to it would certainly be rejected. The Russians clearly regarded Roumania, and probably Hungary, as within their zone of influence, and our attempts to intervene as contrary to the spirit of the bargain struck at Moscow.

We were entitled, under this bargain, to a better position in Bulgaria and Hungary (though not in Roumania) after the conclusion of hostilities with Germany. We ought therefore to put definite proposals to the Russians in regard to the future. Three courses of action were open to us. (i) We could ask—as the Americans suggested—for an improvement in the status of our Missions in Bulgaria and Hungary. The Russians would not agree, and we should merely be continuing our present unsatisfactory and undignified bickering. (ii) We could withdraw our Missions, on the ground that there was nothing for them to do, and leave the protection of our interests in the hands of our political representatives. This course of action would make little practical difference in Hungary and Bulgaria but it would be disadvantageous in Roumania, where our Military Mission was giving some measure of protection to our oil and other commercial interests. It would also be an obvious acknowledgment of defeat and would ruin any prestige left to us in the three countries concerned. (iii) We might propose the conclusion of peace treaties with the three countries concerned. If the Russians agreed, they would then have to reveal their ultimate policy, i.e. they would have to say whether they intended to keep permanent garrisons in the three countries. We could also withdraw our Missions with good grace, and might be able to intervene more effectively with the Governments for the protection and advancement of our commercial and economic interests once our relations were on a normal peace basis.

Mr. Eden suggested that we should take this third course, and also propose the negotiation of a peace treaty with Finland. The Russians would find it more difficult to refuse if we said also that we were willing to conclude a treaty with Italy.

On May 29 the Foreign Office sent instructions to Lord Halifax (a) to explain our proposals to the State Department. Meanwhile on

(a) T1013/5 (Churchill Papers/379; R9257/81/67).

May 27 Stalin sent a message to the Prime Minister and the President suggesting in similar terms that the time had come to re-establish diplomatic relations with the Roumanian, Bulgarian and Finnish Governments and, 'after a short time' with Hungary. Stalin said that Roumania and Bulgaria had broken with Hitlerite Germany more than eight months earlier; they had contributed armed forces to the Allies and had thus collaborated in the victorious conclusion of the war in Europe. Finland had fulfilled the terms of the armistice and had now 'entered on the path of consolidating democratic principles'.

The Prime Minister wrote a minute on May 29 to Mr. Eden (a) asking the Foreign Office to submit a draft reply. The Prime Minister considered that Stalin's suggestion would have to be discussed at the tripartite meeting. We should have to raise there 'the great question of police government versus free government, it always being understood that the intermediate States must not pursue a hostile policy to Russia'. Mr. Churchill did not see 'how things would be worsened by the formal interchange of Ambassadors and by the re-establishment of peaceful relations between the countries involved'. His 'first inclination' was therefore to tell Stalin that we agreed, but in view of Mr. Eden's minute of May 25 he wanted a further examination of the matter.

Mr. Eden replied in a minute of June 1 that, although Stalin (b) had said nothing about peace treaties or the withdrawal of the Red Army from the countries in question, his message at least gave us an opportunity of making our own proposals. Mr. Eden agreed that the whole question should be discussed at the three-Power meeting. Meantime we ought not to agree merely to the re-establishment of diplomatic relations with any of the countries, since we should still be leaving intact the armistice régime through which the Soviet Government controlled them. We ought to concert our policy with the Americans as soon as possible.

On May 27 also Air Vice-Marshal Stevenson, British Commissioner (c) in Roumania, telegraphed that he had seen the United States Commissioner, General Schuyler, on the latter's return from Washington. General Schuyler said that the President was much concerned at the way in which the Russians, contrary to the principles agreed at Yalta, had ruthlessly imposed a minority government in Roumania.

The President took the view that it would be better for the United States and Great Britain 'to pull out [rather] than be kicked around'. The State Department, however, had pointed out that a withdrawal would greatly impair the confidence of the world in the two countries, and that their Missions were a stabilising factor in areas

(a) PMM532/5 (R9257/81/67). (b) P.M./45/216 (R9257/81/67). (c) R9229/10/37.

dominated by Russia. General Schuyler said that opinion in Washington was extremely critical of the Russian action and hoped that the President would 'call Russia's bluff' and invite her either to co-operate fully with Great Britain and the United States in the establishment of world peace (in the Anglo-Saxon sense) or to renounce her international undertakings and declare her strategy and political aims.

- (a) Lord Halifax reported on the night of June 1-2 that the State Department was addressing notes to the British and Soviet Governments regarding the status of American representatives on the Control Commission for Hungary. Lord Halifax wrote that the State Department had given priority to Hungary because the position of the American representative was more clearly defined in the armistice with Hungary than in the other armistices with the satellites, but that the note regarding Hungary would be followed by similar requests for a proper recognition of the status of the American representatives on the Control Commissions for Bulgaria and Roumania. The Foreign Office realised that the State Department were taking a different line from that suggested in our proposals to them. It was, however, too late to stop this; we could only await their reaction to our proposals.

- The difficulty of getting a common policy was increased, however,
- (b) by the President's reply on June 2 to Stalin's message. He said that he agreed that normal relations with the four countries should be re-established as soon as possible, and that he was prepared to exchange diplomatic representatives with Finland without delay. He was, however, disturbed by the political situation in the other three countries, and especially in Roumania and Bulgaria where the Governments did not 'accord to all democratic elements of the people the rights of free expression', and the systems of administration were 'neither representative of nor responsive to the will of the people'. The President hoped that the time would soon come when the United States would resume formal diplomatic relations with these countries. To this end he proposed consultation between the American, British and Soviet representatives 'in order more effectively to concert our policies and actions in this area'.
- (c) The President—at the suggestion of Mr. Harriman and Mr. Hopkins—decided to hold back his reply to Stalin for a time in order not to prejudice the chances of an agreement with the Russians on the Polish question. On hearing of this decision the Prime Minister
- (d) sent a telegram to the President (without showing the draft to the Foreign Office) that he agreed about the delay; he added: 'But do

(a) R9494/81/67. (b) T1047/5, Truman to Churchill No. 54 (Churchill Papers/379; R9587/81/67). (c) T1061/5, Truman to Churchill No. 55 (Churchill Papers/379). (d) T1069/5, No. 74 (Churchill Papers/379; R9779/26/21).

not let us lose that moment for the future of the world hangs upon "countries which accord to all democratic elements of the people the rights of free expression". This will come up in its good time quite soon.'

The President telegraphed a copy of his proposed reply to the Prime Minister. On June 4 Sir O. Sargent sent a memorandum to (a) the Prime Minister pointing out that the reply was on the whole satisfactory, but that the President did not go as far as our own proposals—i.e. he did not mention the conclusion of peace treaties but merely suggested tripartite consultations. He was thus repeating previous American requests, which the Russians had already refused. The President had replied to Stalin without consulting us because he wanted to avoid giving the impression of an Anglo-American front against the Russians. Nevertheless we should try to get him to give up his proposal for consultation under the terms of the Yalta Declaration, and to accept our proposal for the conclusion of peace treaties, and for a discussion at the three-Power Conference.

The Prime Minister sent a reply to Stalin on June 10 stating that (b) we had been considering our future relations with the four countries and hoped very soon to put comprehensive proposals before the Soviet and United States Governments. The Prime Minister hoped that these proposals would be discussed at the forthcoming meeting. Stalin replied on June 14 that he noted that we were sending (c) proposals in the near future. He still thought it desirable not to defer any longer the restoration of diplomatic relations with Roumania, Bulgaria and Finland, though we might wait a little time in the case of Hungary. The Prime Minister asked the Foreign Office on June 15 to let him have our proposals. On the following day the Prime (d) Minister asked the Foreign Office to summarise for him a long telegram of June 7 from Sir A. Clark Kerr. Sir A. Clark Kerr agreed (e) with the Foreign Office view that the best policy would be to try to conclude treaties of peace with the satellites since this course should lead to the withdrawal of Soviet troops. Sir A. Clark Kerr also agreed that we should not support President Truman's request to Stalin for tripartite consultations since in the end we should have to acquiesce in the Soviet refusal to broaden the basis of the three Governments.

On June 17, after reading a telegram of the night of June 15–16 from Lord Halifax, the Prime Minister sent a third minute to the Foreign Office. Lord Halifax said that the State Department had not yet given a considered reply to our proposals for peace treaties (f)

(a) P.M./45/224 (R9587/81/67). (b) T1107/5 (Churchill Papers/379; R10212/81/67).
 (c) T1134/5 (Churchill Papers/379; R10338/81/67). (d) PMM623/5 (R10448/81/67).
 (e) R9818/81/67. (f) R10334/81/67.

with the satellite countries. He thought that the State Department—in their care not to give the Russians an impression that the British and Americans were ‘ganging up against them’—would probably prefer not to join us in putting forward our proposals to the Soviet Government. The Foreign Office replied to Lord Halifax on the evening of June 17 that we would welcome American support in a joint approach to the Soviet Government but that, if the State Department thought that this plan was tactically unwise, we might make the proposal ourselves. Meanwhile our chief desire was to know whether the State Department thought the proposal a good one. We did not know for certain whether the matter would be raised at the Conference but, if it were raised, we should naturally hope for American support.

- (a) The Prime Minister’s third minute, which reached the Foreign Office on June 18, was that he wished to postpone ‘as much as possible’ until the Conference; where this postponement was not possible, we should tell the Americans that we awaited their views, and would not act in advance of this knowledge. The Prime Minister added:

‘It is beyond the power of this country to prevent all sorts of things crashing at the present time. The responsibility lies with the United States and my desire is to give them all the support in our power. If they do not feel able to do anything, then we must let matters take their course—indeed that is what they are doing.’

- (b) The Foreign Office had drawn up a minute for the Prime Minister in reply to his request of June 15 for detailed proposals. They suggested that we should secure the assent of the Dominions to our proposal to conclude peace treaties and then tell the Russians generally of them. We should support at the same time the American proposals for improving the status of the Control Commissions in the Balkans until peace treaties had been made, though we did not expect much from the Russians in the matter. The question—including the character of the governments in power in Roumania, Bulgaria and Hungary—could then be discussed at the Conference.
- (c) The Prime Minister’s minute of June 17, however, implied a change of policy—i.e. no approach to the Soviet Government about the conclusion of treaties unless the United States Government would join in supporting the proposal. The Prime Minister had thus gone back on his minute of June 15 in which he had asked for proposals to be submitted to him. The Foreign Office regarded this change of plan as a mistake. Apart from the fact that Stalin was awaiting with some impatience the proposals which we had promised to send shortly,

(a) PMM635/5 (R10741/81/67). (b) R10338/81/67. (c) R10334/81/67.

there would be more chance of a successful discussion at the Conference if the Russians had had time to think over the plan. (a)

The Foreign Office therefore revised the minute which they had drawn up for the Prime Minister in order to try to get him to go back to the original plan. This revised minute was sent to the Prime Minister on June 19. There was further delay because the Prime Minister's secretariat thought that the minute—as redrafted—contained too many references to previous minutes and telegrams, and that the Prime Minister would be unlikely to read it as it stood. (c) The Foreign Office therefore sent a shorter version to the Prime Minister on June 21 summarising Sir A. Clark Kerr's telegram, and (d) recapitulating the position. On the following day they sent another minute setting out their proposed time-table—i.e. an immediate approach to the Dominions; an approach to the Russians at the end of June (if Dominion approval had been received); a discussion at the conference. (e)

The Prime Minister replied on June 23 to these minutes of June 21 and 22. He said he felt disinclined to go beyond his minute of June 17, since he did not want to get into an argument with Stalin on a matter upon which we had not reached agreement with the United States. He asked the Foreign Office, however, to let him see the drafts of telegrams which they would propose to send to Stalin and President Truman. (f)

Before the Foreign Office had sent any drafts to the Prime Minister, they received the preliminary reply of the State Department to the British proposals. The reply was that the United States Government could not give more than a qualified support to these proposals, since they did not wish to conclude peace treaties with the existing unrepresentative Governments of the Soviet-controlled countries. They were therefore following up the President's proposals for consultation about these Governments in the hope that the Russians would agree to make them more representative. They wanted also to press on with their proposals for the reorganisation of the Control Commissions.

The Foreign Office continued to think that the American plans had little chance of success. The Russians would be no readier than in February or March to fulfil the terms of the Yalta Declaration. They would not agree to making the Control Commissions genuinely tripartite, since the Russian representative would be in a minority against the British and American representatives. The Russians, for example, had already given to the reparation and restitution clauses of the armistices an interpretation of which we and the

(a) P.M./45/227 (R10334/81/67). (b) R10741/81/67. (c) P.M./45/285 (R10448/81/67). (d) P.M./45/287 (R10741/81/67). (e) PMM655/5 (R10742/81/67). (f) R10742, 10766, 10767, 10768/81/67.

Americans could not approve; they would certainly not be willing to agree to our interpretation.

- (a) Since the Australian Government also had doubts whether the time had come to suggest the conclusion of peace treaties, the Foreign Office decided to recommend to the Prime Minister that we should not put our own proposals to the Russians before the meeting of the Conference. Lord Halifax thought that if, as we expected, the American plan did not succeed, the United States Government would then be willing to back us at or after the Conference. Meanwhile we should leave Stalin's telegram of June 14 unanswered. The Prime Minister accepted these suggestions. Lord Halifax was therefore instructed to tell the State Department of our decision.
- (b)
- (c) On July 9 the United States Embassy in London informed the Foreign Office that the United States Missions in Bulgaria, Roumania and Hungary did not believe that representations to the Russians about the fulfilment of the Yalta Declaration would necessarily fail. They advised against the conclusion of peace treaties on the ground that they would imply the formal recognition of the puppet Governments, acceptance of the Russian domination of the three countries, and the abandonment of any attempt to apply the policy agreed at Yalta. The American representatives did not think even that the Russian armies would withdraw on the conclusion of peace treaties, especially if real authority remained in the hands of Communist groups. Hence the United States Delegation at the Conference would press for the implementation of the Yalta Declaration and the reorganisation of the Control Commissions, and would oppose proposals to establish diplomatic relations or conclude peace treaties with the existing Governments in the three countries. The Foreign Office replied to the United States Embassy on July 12 repeating their doubts about the success of the American plan, and restating the argument for the conclusion of treaties before the present unsatisfactory Governments had entrenched themselves and as the only means open to us of creating conditions in which really democratic Governments might later emerge. In view, however, of the policy recommended by the State Department we had not put our proposals to the Soviet Government in advance of the Conference, though we might wish to bring them forward at the Conference itself.

Thus at the opening of the Conference there was a certain disagreement between the British and American Delegations on the best way of securing their common aim. The disagreement was,

(a) R10739/81/67. (b) R11177/5063/67. (c) R11658/5063/67.

however, at all events from the British angle of view, less important because the British Delegation did not expect the Russians to accept the American plan; the Americans would then be readier to support our own proposal for the conclusion of peace treaties. The brief for the British Delegation at the Conference suggested that we should (a) not necessarily wait for the Americans to be disillusioned about their plan, but that we should take the earliest opportunity of introducing our proposals at the Conference, even though we might find ourselves for once in agreement with the Russians against the Americans.

The subject was mentioned in a short and informal talk between (b) the British and United States Delegations before the Conference. The American representatives said that the question of peace treaties with the Balkan States was the only point of disagreement between the two Delegations. They told the British Delegation that the President was particularly interested in the Yalta Declaration and would be likely to bring it up at the Conference and to link it with an improvement in the position of the Control Commissions.

(a) R11596/5063/67. (b) R12309/5063/67.

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