

COLD WAR - The Yalta Conference

Source 1



Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill at the Yalta Conference, 1945

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Source 2

PROTOCOL OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE CRIMEA CONFERENCE

Yalta, 11th February, 1945

The Crimea Conference of the Heads of the Governments of the United States of America, the United Kingdom, and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, which took place from the 4th-11th February, came to the following conclusions:—

I.—World Organisation

It was decided:

- (1) That a United Nations Conference on the proposed World Organisation should be summoned for Wednesday, the 25th April, 1945, and should be held in the United States of America.
- (2) The nations to be invited to this Conference should be:
 - (a) the United Nations as they existed on the 8th February, 1945; and
 - (b) such of the Associated Nations as have declared war on the common enemy by the 1st March, 1945. (For this purpose by the term "Associated Nations" was meant the eight Associated Nations and Turkey.)

When the Conference on World Organisation is held, the delegates of the United Kingdom and United States of America will support a proposal to admit to original membership two Soviet Socialist Republics, *i.e.*, the Ukraine and White Russia.

- (3) That the United States Government on behalf of the Three Powers should consult the Government of China and the French Provisional Government in regard to the decisions taken at the present Conference concerning the proposed World Organisation.
- (4) That the text of the invitation to be issued to all the nations which would take part in the United Nations Conference should be as follows:—

INVITATION

"The Government of the United States of America, on behalf of itself and of the Governments of the United Kingdom, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and the Republic of China and of the Provisional Government of the French Republic, invite the Government of to send representatives to a Conference of the United Nations to be held on the 25th April, 1945, or soon thereafter, at San Francisco in the United States of America to prepare a Charter for a General International Organisation for the maintenance of international peace and security.

"The above-named Governments suggest that the Conference consider as affording a basis for such a Charter the Proposals for the Establishment

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The Heads of the three Governments have agreed as follows:—

1. Germany must pay in kind for the losses caused by her to the Allied nations in the course of the war. Reparations are to be received in the first instance by those countries which have borne the main burden of the war, have suffered the heaviest losses and have organised victory over the enemy.

2. Reparation in kind is to be exacted from Germany in three following forms:—

- (a) Removals within two years from the surrender of Germany or the cessation of organised resistance from the national wealth of Germany located on the territory of Germany herself as well as outside her territory (equipment, machine-tools, ships, rolling-stock, German investments abroad, shares of industrial, transport and other enterprises in Germany, &c.), these removals to be carried out chiefly for purpose of destroying the war potential of Germany.
- (b) Annual deliveries of goods from current production for a period to be fixed.
- (c) Use of German labour.

3. For the working out on the above principles of a detailed plan for exaction of reparation from Germany an Allied Reparation Commission will be set up in Moscow. It will consist of three representatives—one from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, one from the United Kingdom and one from the United States of America.

4. With regard to the fixing of the total sum of the reparation as well as the distribution of it among the countries which suffered from the German aggression the Soviet and American delegations agreed as follows:—

“The Moscow Reparation Commission should take in its initial studies as a basis for discussion the suggestion of the Soviet Government that the total sum of the reparation in accordance with the points (a) and (b) of the paragraph 2 should be 20 billion dollars and that 50 per cent. of it should go to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.”

The British delegation was of the opinion that pending consideration of the reparation question by the Moscow Reparation Commission no figures of reparation should be mentioned.

The above Soviet-American proposal has been passed to the Moscow Reparation Commission as one of the proposals to be considered by the Commission.

VI.—Major War Criminals

The Conference agreed that the question of the major war criminals

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“ The establishment of order in Europe and the rebuilding of national economic life must be achieved by processes which will enable the liberated peoples to destroy the last vestiges of Nazism and Fascism, and to create democratic institutions of their own choice. This is a principle of the Atlantic Charter—the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live—the restoration of sovereign rights and self-government to those peoples who have been forcibly deprived of them by the aggressor nations.

“ To foster the conditions in which the liberated peoples may exercise these rights, the three Governments will jointly assist the people in any European liberated State or former Axis satellite State in Europe where in their judgment conditions require (a) to establish conditions of internal peace; (b) to carry out emergency measures for the relief of distressed peoples; (c) 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 (d) to facilitate where necessary the holding of such elections.

Extract from the Yalta Protocol - the agreements signed by Britain, the USA and the USSR at the Yalta Conference February 1945

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Source 3

When we met at Yalta, in addition to laying out strategic and tactical plans for the complete and final military victory over Germany, there were other problems of vital political consequence.

Days were spent in discussing these momentous matters, and we argued freely and frankly across the table. But at the end on every point unanimous agreement was reached. And more important even than the agreement of words, I may say we achieved a unity of thought and a way of getting along together. We know, of course, that it was Hitler's hope and the German war lords' hope that we would not agree -- that some slight crack might appear in the solid wall of Allied unity, a crack that would give him and his fellow gangsters one last hope of escaping their just doom. That is the objective for which his propaganda machine has been working for many months. But Hitler has failed.

Never before have the major Allies been more closely united -- not only in their war aims but also in their peace aims. And they are determined to continue to be united, to be united with each other -- and with all peace-loving nations -- so that the ideal of lasting peace will become a reality.

Extracts from US President Roosevelt's speech to the US Congress on the Yalta Conference, March 1st 1945

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One outstanding example of joint action by the three major Allied powers was the solution reached on Poland. The whole Polish question was a potential source of trouble in post-war Europe, and we came to the conference determined to find a common ground for its solution. We did. We know everybody does not agree with it -- obviously.

Our objective was to help create a strong, independent, and prosperous nation -- that is the thing we must all remember -- those words agreed to by Russia, by Britain, and by me: the objective of making Poland a strong, independent, and prosperous nation with a government ultimately to be selected by the Polish people themselves.

To achieve this objective, it was necessary to provide for the formation of a new government much more representative than had been possible while Poland was enslaved. There are, you know, two governments; one in London, one in Lublin, practically in Russia.

Accordingly, steps were taken at Yalta to reorganise the existing provisional government in Poland on a broader democratic basis, so as to include democratic leaders now in Poland and those abroad. This new, reorganised government will be recognised by all of us as the temporary government of Poland. Poland needs a temporary government in the worst way -- an interim government is another way to put it. However, the new Polish provisional government of national unity will be pledged to holding a free election as soon as possible on the basis of universal suffrage and a secret ballot.

Throughout history, Poland has been the corridor through which attacks on Russia have been made. Twice in this generation, Germany has struck at Russia through this corridor. To insure European security and world peace, a strong and independent Poland is necessary to prevent that from happening again.

The decisions with respect to the boundaries of Poland were frankly a compromise. I did not agree with all of them by any means. But we did not go as far as Britain wanted in certain areas; we did not go as far as Russia wanted in certain areas; and we did not go as far as I wanted in certain areas. It was a compromise.

Extracts from US President Roosevelt's speech to the US Congress on the Yalta Conference, March 1st 1945, referring to the question of Poland

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Source 5

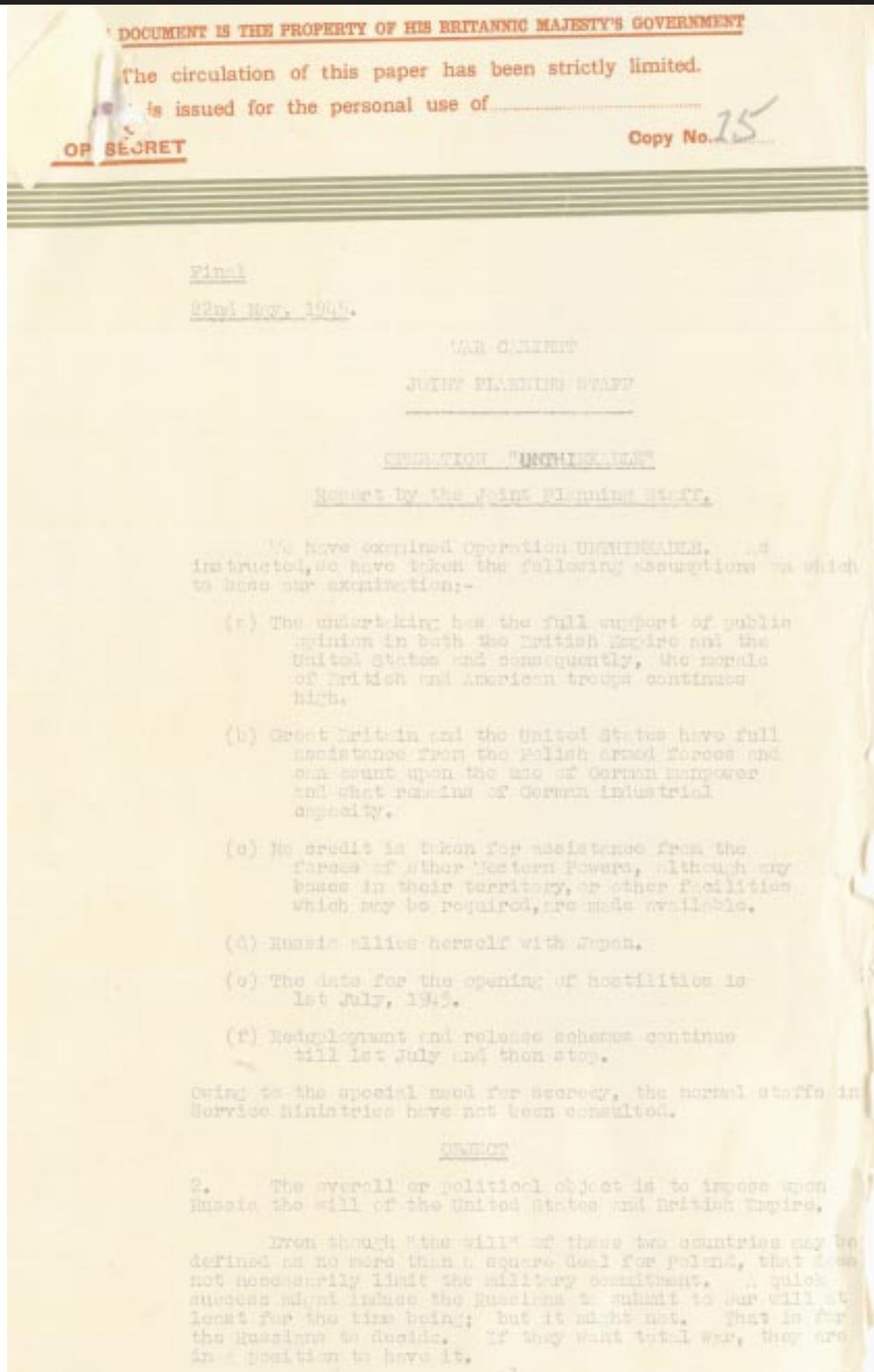
1. I am profoundly concerned about the European situation as outlined in my No. 41. I learn that half the American Air Force in Europe has already begun to move to the Pacific theatre. The newspapers are full of the great movements of the American Armies out of Europe. Our Armies also are under previous 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.

2. 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 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?

Telegram from Prime Minister Winston Churchill to US President Truman, May 12th 1945. It comments on relations between the Allies in the months after the Yalta Conference

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Source 6



Part of a report from British military leaders to the Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, regarding a plan called 'Operation Unthinkable' - a surprise attack on the USSR, 1945

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3. The only way in which we can achieve our object with certainty and lasting results is by victory in a total war but in view of what we have said in paragraph 2 above, and the possibility of quick success, we have thought it right to consider the problem on two hypotheses:-

- (a) That a total war is necessary, and on this hypothesis we have examined our chances of success.
- (b) That the political appreciation is that a quick success would suffice to gain our political object and that the continuing commitment need not concern us.

TOTAL WAR

4. Apart from the chances of revolution in the U.S.S.R. and the political collapse of the present regime - on which we are not competent to express an opinion - the elimination of Russia could only be achieved as a result of:-

- (a) The occupation of such areas of metropolitan Russia that the war making capacity of the country would be reduced to a point at which further resistance became impossible.
- (b) Such a decisive defeat of the Russian forces in the field as to render it impossible for the U.S.S.R. to continue the war.

Part of a report from British military leaders to the Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, regarding a plan called 'Operation Unthinkable' - a surprise attack on the USSR, 1945