

November 12, 1945

TASS Reports Distributed to Cdes. I.V. Stalin, V.M. Molotov, A.I. Mikyan, L.P. Beria, G.M. Malenkov, and A. Ya. Vyshinsky

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Summary:

TASS reports on foreign news stories it views as slanderous to Joseph Stalin, including stories on his declining health and possible successors.

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Translation - English

[stamp: Secret
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Top Secret

CORRESPONDENCE OF RALPH HEWINS IN THE "DAILY MAIL"

LONDON, 10 November (TASS). The newspaper "Daily Mail" has placed on the front page articles of [their] Stockholm correspondent Ralph Hewins under the following large headline across the entire page: "A political general delivered from Leningrad as a 'watchdog' is called the future ruler of Russia in a secret letter to the Presidium - Stalin has made a new step in sending the 'successor to watch over Moscow". [Translator's note: the following sentence was highlighted in red in the left margin]. The special correspondent asserts that Zhdanov arrived in Moscow "ready to take control of the country if Stalin's illness continues. According to a report of well-informed Finnish circles in a secret letter sent for storage in the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet Stalin personally named Zhdanov his successor. Thus, Stalin is evidently following the example of Lenin, leaving secret instructions about who should take power in Russia during a transitional period. The future will show, the correspondent writes, whether Stalin's wishes will be fulfilled more accurately than Lenin's testament was. In the latest information received in Stockholm from Moscow via Finland it points out that the generals and political leaders are trying to take the most advantageous positions". Zhdanov, writes the correspondent, is "as anonymous as was Stalin when Lenin died", and adds that after Beria Zhdanov enjoys "the broadest authority in the Soviet security system". As a general, Zhdanov enjoyed the trust of the Soviet General Staff and could be confident of the strong military support of the Leningrad garrison and the Soviet Baltic Fleet if matters came to putting the cards on the table in questions of the domestic situation. He has played cautiously and, like Stalin in 1920, has tried to remain in the background".

Concerning Zhdanov's biography, the correspondent points out that Zhdanov joined the Communist Party at age 17 and adds: "But Zhdanov was not an extremist; this is the type of honest political figure who, like Stalin, does not waste words in vain and adheres to the letter of each agreement...Politically, Zhdanov is an unknown quantity. The Finns consider him a hardcore enemy of Finland and Scandinavia, but this is a consequence of the events that have occurred in Finland since the time of the Russo-Finnish armistice in September 1944. An article written by Zhdanov in Pravda in June 1939 and directed against the Anglo-Russian alliance proposed at that time, covers his international sympathies from the other side. At that time, writes the correspondent, I was in Finland and I was given to understand through the highest diplomatic channels that this article was written under the influence of Stalin. However, at this present time this article of Zhdanov's might be viewed only as an extraordinary measure".

AUSTRALIAN NEWSPAPERS ABOUT "THE STATE OF HEALTH OF CDE. STALIN"

SYDNEY, 11 November (TASS). The newspaper the Sun and Sydney Daily Telegram have published the reports of the Stockholm correspondent of the Daily Mail newspaper that "the health of Stalin is in a critical state, and that Zhdanov is ready to take responsibility for the rule of Soviet Russia". The Sun newspaper published portraits of Cde. Zhdanov in connection with this.

FROM A SURVEY OF THE SWEDISH NEWSPAPERS

1254. STOCKHOLM, 12 November (TASS). The newspapers are sending a report that the state of Stalin's health is good, however he will not accept an invitation to take

part in talks in Washington. Stalin supposedly gave Molotov and Zhukov very great authority.

The newspaper Morgen Tidningen, commenting on rumors about the state of health of Cde. Stalin, today writes in the lead article: "It seems that a change worthy of note is occurring in Moscow during the talks in Washington. Stalin could have noted many times that rumors of his death are unfounded. But it is clear that the state of his health has worsened. Possibly Truman and Attlee are not imagining the possibility of meeting personally with the last of the three great leaders of the World War Two period. But even if Stalin has to abandon active work due to the state of [his] health we nevertheless do not think that this would lead to significant changes in Russian policy. Possibly the national sentiment of the Russians will be displayed even more strongly. Some circles might hope for an internal split in the Soviet Union after Stalin retires. However, there is nothing that would justify such assumptions".

RADIO BROADCASTS

Brazzaville, French, 12 November, transcript.

According to a statement of diplomatic circles of Washington Generalissimo Stalin will not be invited to take part in the discussions between Attlee and Truman. After a brief illness Generalissimo Stalin continues to rest on the Black Sea coast.

NEW YORK, Polish, 12 November, transcript

The United Press agency reports from Helsinki: Zhdanov, the head of the Allied Control Commission, is in Helsinki. Rumors in the capital of Finland that yesterday Zhdanov left for Moscow to take the post of the allegedly ill Stalin are not being confirmed.

Seven copies printed

- 1 - to Cde. I. V. Stalin
- 2 - to Cde. V. M. Molotov
- 3 - to Cde. A. I. Mikoyan
- 4 - to Cde. L. P. Beria
- 5 - to Cde. G. M. Malenkov
- 6 - to Cde. A. Ya. Vyshinsky
- 7 - to the file of the s/o [?special department?]

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ak [handwritten: PR]