

March 3, 1944

Stalin and Harriman Discuss Air Power and the Japanese

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Summary:

Ambassador Harriman and Joseph Stalin discuss Far East Air Power and intelligence about Japanese military movements.

Original Language:

English

Contents:

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Salisbury Military 30

Conversation.

March 3, 1944, 9:30 p.m.
The Kremlin

Present: The American Ambassador, Mr. Harriman
Mr. F. B. Stevens, Second Secretary of
Embassy

Marshal J. V. Stalin
Mr. V. M. Molotov
Mr. Bereshkov, interpreter

Subject: Military Questions.

During his conversation with Marshal Stalin tonight the Ambassador stated that he desired to thank Marshal Stalin for the reception which had been given to the United States Air Force officers who had come to Moscow to make arrangements for shuttle bombing. He said that he understood the officers were leaving tomorrow to inspect possible fields. He added that these officers had come to Moscow in one of the latest types of combat Flying Fortresses which he understood had been of considerable interest to the Red Air Force. He felt that this plane would be of interest to Marshal Stalin and said that it would be a great honor to the United States Air Force if Marshal Stalin could find time to inspect the plane.

Marshal Stalin replied that he had no time.

The Ambassador stated that the last time he saw Marshal Stalin, Stalin had said that at an appropriate time the Chief of the Far Eastern Air Forces would come to Moscow to meet General Beane and discuss bases in the

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-2-

Far East. The Ambassador asked whether his arrival could be expected soon. Marshal Stalin replied that he would arrive in Moscow in the near future.

The Ambassador said he desired to inquire whether Marshal Stalin had received his letter concerning intelligence information about Japan and whether Marshal Stalin had received any additional information on this subject. Stalin replied that he had not seen the letter.

The Ambassador stated that it appeared that the Japanese had withdrawn all their heavy naval vessels from the Pacific area now under attack and since they were unable to provide air replacements were leaving their troops in forward positions to fight until destroyed. Marshal Stalin asked whether the Ambassador was referring to the Central Sector of the Pacific, to which the Ambassador replied in the affirmative mentioning Rabaul, Truk, and the Marianas. He said that the main Japanese naval vessels had apparently been withdrawn from this area to the Philippines or to home waters.

Marshal Stalin replied that this was good. He said that the Japanese had inadequate forces to hold their outer defense lines and that they were trying to shorten their front.

The Ambassador asked whether Marshal Stalin had received any information concerning Japanese intentions with regard to the defense of the Philippines, to which

-3-

Marshal Stalin replied that unfortunately he had not.

The Ambassador stated that we would accordingly await the arrival of the Chief of the Far Eastern Air Forces before beginning the conversations regarding bases. Stalin replied in the affirmative.

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□ Marshal Stalin replied that he had no time.

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