



**Wilson  
Center**

**Digital Archive**  
International History Declassified

[digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org](https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org)

**March 3, 1944**

**Paraphrase of Embassy's telegram No. 716, March  
3, 1944, to the Department of State**

**Citation:**

"Paraphrase of Embassy's telegram No. 716, March 3, 1944, to the Department of State", March 3, 1944, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Container 171, W. Averell Harriman Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C  
<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/209793>

**Summary:**

Joseph Stalin and Ambassador Harriman discuss Stalin's views on Poland.

**Original Language:**

English

**Contents:**

Original Scan  
Transcript - English

Container 171, W.A. Harriman papers LOC  
pols

44

03-03 telegram re Stalin conversation, 27

PARAPHRASE of Embassy's telegram No. 716, March 3, 1944,  
to the Department of State.

-----

For the President and the Acting Secretary.. Per-  
sonal and ~~Secret~~.

Stalin asked me to call on him this evening. He indicated clearly that he would not deal with the Polish Government as now constituted in London. At one point he signified that he would deal with the Polish Government if it were reorganized, but later he stated he did not believe Churchill would be able to accomplish anything as he considered that the London Government was fooling the Prime Minister.

Explaining your concern over the reaction in the United States, I asked Stalin what he had in mind as an alternative. He replied that the Poles were welcoming the Red Army as it advanced, and this they would continue to do. Mikolajczyk's Government would change, or else another Government in Poland would emerge. Despite my urging him, he did not indicate that he had any moves in mind at this time except his suggestions for a possible solution which had already been given me by Molotov in January.

As you had indicated, I explained that this proposal would mean a hand-picked group with no popular movement behind it and would not be a representative government, to which he replied that there were no grounds for this assumption. "Poland," he said, "needs democrats who will look after the interests of the people, not Tory landlords."

What was upper most in your mind, I explained to Stalin, was that all Poles should join in assisting the Red Army rather than wait for a situation to develop which would result in civil war. He replied that there was no danger of this as the only ones to create disorder and revolution were the landlords and they would not be readmitted; furthermore, Mikolajczyk had no armed forces of any size in Poland.

I asked Stalin what information he had about the sentiments of the Poles within Poland toward the London Government, in response to his statement that the members of that Government were a group of emigrés who did not represent their people. He replied that the attitude was negative and that I could get such detailed information as was available from Molotov.

Reproduced from the Collections of the Manuscript Division, Library of Congress  
with concurrence of  
Declassify on: 1; part and whole as a year  
EO 12958, Dec. 15, 2011  
ACCORDS by [signature] 8/15/84

- 2 -

I questioned him as to the Polish underground forces. "They (the Polish Government) have a few agents," he said. As to the size of the underground, he said he couldn't answer exactly but that it was not great in numbers.

I expressed to Stalin my belief that we all had the same eventual objective of a democratic government through the free choice of the Polish people. In reply to my question as to how he thought this objective could be reached, he said that circumstances would show and that he himself didn't know how the situation would work out.

Stalin asked whether I had your answer to his request, which had been submitted to you through the Soviet Ambassador in Washington, to allow Lange and Orlemanski to come to Russia. I was unable to reply to his question as I had not heard of this request. To my query as to what he hoped would be accomplished by this visit, he answered that they would meet the Poles in Moscow, would find out what was going on in Poland from information here, and would return to the United States after looking over the situation.

In concluding the conversation on this subject, I said it was my understanding that he would take no immediate action but would await developments. To this he replied that the time was not ripe. I reiterated the unfavorable public reaction created in the United States. He commented that public opinion here was of concern to him. "We have had three revolutions in a generation", he stated when I remarked that he was skillful in dealing with public opinion.

PARAPHRASE of Embassy's telegram No. 716, March 3, 1944, to the Department of State.

-----

□ For the President and the Acting Secretary.. Personal and Secret.

□ Stalin asked me to call on him this evening. He indicated clearly that he would not deal with the Polish Government as now constituted in London. At one point he signified that he would deal with the Polish Government if it were reorganized, but later he stated he did not believe Churchill would be able to accomplish anything as he considered that the London Government was fooling the Prime Minister.

□ Explaining your concern over the reaction in the United States, I asked Stalin what he had in mind as an alternative. He replied that the Poles were welcoming the Red Army as it advanced, and this they would continue to do. Mikolajczyk's Government would change, or else another Government in Poland would emerge. Despite my urging him, he did not indicate that he had any moves in mind at this time except his suggestions for a possible solution which had already been given me by Molotov in January.

□ As you had indicated, I explained that this proposal would mean a hand-picked group with no popular movement behind it and would not be a representative government, to which he replied that there were no grounds for this assumption. "Poland," he said, "needs democrats who will look after the interests of the people, not Tory landlords."

□ What was upper most in your mind, I explained to Stalin, was that all Poles should join in assisting the Red Army rather than wait for a situation to develop which would result in civil war. He replied that there was no danger of this as the only ones to create disorder and revolution were the landlords and they would not be readmitted; furthermore, Mikolajczyk had no armed forces of any size in Poland.

□ I asked Stalin what information he had about the sentiments of the Poles within Poland toward the London Government, in response to his statement: that the members of that Government were a group of émigrés who did not represent their people. He replied that the attitude was negative and that I could get such detailed information as was available from Molotov.

□ I questioned him as to the Polish underground forces. "They (the Polish Government) have a few agents," he said [sic]. As to the size of the underground, he said he couldn't answer exactly but that it was not great in numbers.

□ I expressed to Stalin my belief that we all had the same eventual objective of a democratic government through the free choice of the Polish people. In reply to my question as to how he thought this objective could be reached, he said that circumstances would show and that he himself didn't know how the situation would work out.

□ Stalin asked whether I had your answer to his request, which had been submitted to you through the Soviet Ambassador in Washington, to allow Lange and Orlemanski to come to Russia. I was unable to reply to his question as I had not heard of this request. To my query as to what he hoped would be accomplished by this visit, he answered that they would meet the Poles in Moscow, would find out what was going on in Poland from information here, and would return to the United States after looking over the situation.

□ In concluding the conversation on this subject, I said it was my understanding that he

would take no immediate action but would await developments. To this he replied that the time was not ripe. I reiterated the unfavorable public reaction created in the United States. He commented that public opinion here was of no concern to him. "We have had three revolutions in a generation", he stated when I remarked that he was skillful in dealing with public opinion.