

June 10, 1944

Paraphrase of Telegram From Harriman to the President

Citation:

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Summary:

Harriman relays Stalin's thoughts on the Chinese government and military to the President.

Original Language:

English

Contents:

Original Scan
Transcript - English

44-610 TELEGRAM

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W.A. Harriman
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PARAPHRASE of telegram sent on June 10, 1944, by Ambassador Harriman marked "Personal and Secret for the eyes of the President only", from Moscow via NAVY.

During the course of our conversation this evening about joint planning for the war against Japan, Stalin interrupted to inquire as to the cooperation of China, emphasizing that something in this connection needed to be done. He stated that the Chinese were not fighting, that in Loyang thirteen Japanese divisions had beaten forty Chinese divisions.

While agreeing that Chiang Kai-shek must be supported and that he was the only man who could hold China together, Marshal Stalin said that the Generalissimo's entourage were dishonest, that anything discussed in Chungking quickly reached the Japanese, and that the Chinese were not fighting so well as they were five years ago.

Stalin said that the Generalissimo was eyeing with suspicion the so-called communists in the North. These he laughingly called "margarine communists" which I assume meant not real communists. He characterized these people as being real patriots who wanted to fight the Japanese, and he said that Chiang, in disputing with them on ideological questions rather than employing them against the enemy, was making a mistake.

In reply to my question as to what he thought should be our combined policy toward the Generalissimo, Stalin said that since it was impossible for either the British or the Russians to do so, it was necessary that the United States should take the lead. We should insist, he said, that the Generalissimo eliminate his dishonest entourage and that an opportunity to take authority should be given to the younger men who wanted to fight. Stalin continued that Chiang's present entourage were accusing the Soviet Union of having a secret treaty with Japan directed against China. In some detail he explained to me the border incidents between Outer Mongolia and Sinkiang, but he added that everything was quiet now. If this sort of thing continued, however, Soviet armed forces would have to support Outer Mongolia.

After mentioning that I was going to meet Vice President Wallace next week at Tashkent, I inquired whether Marshal Stalin thought any useful purpose would be served by my accompanying Mr. Wallace to Chungking. The Marshal gave me the impression that he liked the idea and he

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copy Mr. Harriman

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stated definitely that he saw no objection. I explained, of course, that this was a new thought and that I did not know whether anything would come of it.

It is my feeling, from the frankness with which Stalin talked to me about Chiang and the situation in Chungking, that it might be useful if I accompanied Mr. Wallace to Chungking, returning to Moscow with some message from the Generalissimo which might be of assistance in clarifying the strained atmosphere of the present. Of the many talks I have had with Marshal Stalin, this evening's has been the most intimate, and I believe Stalin would pay some attention to what I might have to say on my return from Chungking.

Without involving ourselves in the details of the disagreement between Stalin and the Generalissimo, it seems to me of prime importance that an attempt to remove suspicions, some of which are unfounded, should be undertaken by us.

An intense interest in China was displayed by Stalin in connection with Soviet participation in the Japanese war, and he evidenced a desire to have created a situation (which he made it plain did not exist today) by which he could cooperate with Chiang Kai-shek.

Receipt of your reaction to the idea of my proceeding onward with the Vice President would be appreciated. He is four days ahead of schedule and in order to meet him at Tashkent I am leaving Moscow Tuesday or Wednesday, June 13 or 14.

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[cc to "Mr. Hamilton"]

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