

June 26, 1944

Stalin and Harriman Exchange Military Information

Citation:

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Summary:

Harriman and Stalin discuss their own armies and how to deal with the German Army after the war.

Original Language:

English

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Transcript - English

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Conversation.

June 26, 1944

Present: The American Ambassador, Mr. Harriman
Mr. Edward Page, Second Secretary of
Embassy

Marshal I. V. Stalin
Mr. V. M. Molotov, People's Commissar
for Foreign Affairs
Mr. Pavlov, Soviet interpreter

Subject: Exchange of Military Information

Marshal Stalin recalled the decisions reached at Tehran with respect to joint military operations and pointed out that, as he had promised at Tehran, the Russian offensive had started shortly after the invasion of Europe. I stated that the President, General Marshall, General Eisenhower, had had no doubt whatsoever that this offensive would start. Stalin said that nonetheless doubts had existed in certain quarters. I again pointed out that no one in the higher circles of the Allied Governments or Armies ever entertained such doubts. Stalin said that he had informed the President on June 21 of the date of the coming Soviet offensive and that 130 divisions would be involved. However, he had not told the President of the exact locality of the offensive for he feared some possible leak. Newspapermen wrote articles for personal profit. I stated that I knew that General Marshall did not desire to know where the offensive would take place but added, however, that once the Anglo-American armies had firmly established themselves on the continent and once the Russian and the Anglo-American armies were getting closer to each other, it would be necessary to set up some close liaison whereby plans and future strategy might become known to each side. Stalin agreed and stated that it would of course be advisable to establish some such consultative group. I said that General Deane was leaving in a week or ten days to consult with General Eisenhower and General Marshall on this subject.

I emphasized to the Marshal that real security existed within the American and British military staff. Stalin stated that he was not always so sure that secrets would be maintained in so far as the British were concerned. He said that there had been two examples of secret communications from him to Prime Minister Churchill which had leaked out to the press. In addition he said that the Soviet proposals which had been advanced on the

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Harriman meeting
conversation re
exchange of military info

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European Advisory Commission to the effect that the German army after the defeat of Germany should be a prisoner army, had also leaked out to the press before agreement had been reached on this point. He said that after the defeat of France the Germans had enforced upon the French army a similar prisoner status. However, the American and British representatives on the European Advisory Commission had opposed such a step on the grounds that it would make the Germans the perpetual enemies of the Russians. Stalin stated that the Russians could take care of that.

I pointed out that the leaks which he was referring to were political and not military in nature, the first was really a question between him and the Prime Minister personally, and that the greatest secrecy and security were maintained in anything to do with military questions. As an example, I said that although the Germans knew that the invasion was coming they did not know where we would strike and were consequently caught unaware. I also referred generally to North Africa and the Pacific operations. Although Stalin apparently agreed that real military security was being maintained, he referred to a certain American major-general who had recently been punished for talking out of turn. I said that I knew of this incident and that it involved an American major-general who had talked to another officer on secret matters which he had no business to talk about. He had been immediately demoted to a lieutenant-colonel and sent home. I said that this was an example of the drastic punishment we meted out to anyone who broke our security rules. Stalin said that "we have loose talkers too and we also know how to deal with them".

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~~copy to General Deane~~

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Conversation. [redacted] June 26, 1944

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- Mr. Edward Page, Second Secretary of Embassy

- Marshal I. V. Stalin
- Mr. V. M. Molotov, People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs
- Mr. Pavlov, Soviet interpreter

Subject: Exchange of Military Information

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