

August 17, 1945

Draft Message from Joseph Stalin to Harry S. Truman

Citation:

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Summary:

Stalin requests that the Soviet Union gain possession of the Kurile Islands and the northern half of the island of Hokkaido, Japan.

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

I received your message with "General Order No. 1." In the main I do not object to the content of the order. With this, one has in mind that Liaodong Peninsula is a constituent part of Manchuria. However, I propose to introduce the following amendments to "General Order No. 1":

1. Include all of the Kurile Islands, which, according to the decision of the third powers in the Crimea must pass into the possession of the Soviet Union, into the region of surrender by Japanese armed forces to Soviet forces.

2. Include the northern half of the island of Hokkaido, which adjoins in the North the Laperouse Strait, located between Karafuto and Hokkaido, into the region of surrender by Japanese armed forces to Soviet forces. The demarcation line between the northern and southern halves of the island of Hokkaido is to be drawn along the line, extending from the town of Kushiro on the eastern coast of the island until the town of Rumoe [sic] on the western coast of the island, including the said towns in the northern half of the island.

This latter proposal holds special significance for the Russian public opinion. As is known, the Japanese in 1919-1921 had under occupation of their forces all of the Soviet Far East. The Russian public opinion would be seriously offended if the Russian forces did not have a region of occupation in some part of properly Japanese territory.

I would very much want that my modest wishes recounted above ["were satisfied" crossed out in red pencil by Stalin] did not meet with objections.

16 August 1945

[Notes on the telegram conveying this message indicate that it was sent from Moscow at 3:20am on 17 August 1945 and received by the Soviet Embassy in Washington at 23.35 on August 16 1945 local times]