

August 19, 1945

Translation of Message from Harry S. Truman to Joseph Stalin

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Summary:

Responding to a message from Stalin, Truman agrees to allow Soviet control of the Kurile Islands, but stresses that all islands of Japan proper, including Hokkaido, are to be surrendered to US forces.

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

Received on August 19, 1945

Translation from English
EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Moscow, August 18, 1945

TOP SECRET

Dear Mr. Molotov:

I have just received the following message from the President [the word "President" crossed out by Stalin in blue pencil] to Generalissimus Stalin:

"TOP SECRET FOR GENERALISSIMUS STALIN FROM PRESIDENT TRUMAN:

"Replying to your message of August 16, I agree to your request to modify General Order Number 1 to include all the Kurile Islands in the area to be surrendered to the Commander-in-Chief of the Soviet Forces in the Far East. However, I should like it to be understood that the United States Government desires air base rights for land and sea aircraft on some one of the Kurile Islands, preferably in the central group, for military purposes and for commercial use. [underlined by Stalin] I should be glad if you would advise me that you will agree to such an arrangement, the location and other details to be worked out through the appointment of special representatives of our two Governments for this purpose.

"Regarding your suggestion as to the surrender of Japanese forces on the Island Hokkaido [underlined by Stalin] to Soviet forces, it is my intention and arrangements have been made for the surrender of Japanese forces on all the islands of Japan proper, Hokkaido, Honshu, Shikoku and Kyushu, to General MacArthur.

"General MacArthur employs for temporary occupation of Japan proper selected allied armed forces, which, of course, will include Soviet forces, insomuch as he considers it necessary [underlined by Stalin] in order to accomplish our Allied surrender terms."

Will you please transmit this message to the Generalissimus.

Sincerely Yours, W.A. Harriman

His Excellency
V.M. Molotov
People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Moscow