

July 9, 1947

**Record of I.V. Stalin's Conversation with the
Czechoslovak Government Delegation on the Issue
of Their Position Regarding the Marshall Plan and
the Prospects for Economic Cooperation with the
USSR**

Citation:

"Record of I.V. Stalin's Conversation with the Czechoslovak Government Delegation on the Issue of Their Position Regarding the Marshall Plan and the Prospects for Economic Cooperation with the USSR", July 9, 1947, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Vostochnaia Evropa, edited by G.P. Murashko, et al, vol.1, pp. 672-75 (APRE, f. 45, op, 1, d. 393, l. 101-05) <https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/134379>

Summary:

Stalin speaks with members of the Czechoslovak delegation regarding their decision to attend the Paris Conference in 1947, and urges them not to attend. Further discussion includes Czechoslovak-USSR economic relations.

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

Record of I.V. Stalin's Conversation
with the Czechoslovak Government Delegation
on the Issue of Their Position Regarding the Marshall Plan
and the Prospects for Economic Cooperation with the USSR

Moscow
July 9, 1947
SECRET

Present: Comrade I.V. Stalin, Comrade V.M. Molotov, Prime Minister of Czechoslovak Republic Gottwald, Minister of Foreign Affairs Masaryk, Minister of Justice Drtina, General Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czechoslovak Republic Gendrih and Czechoslovak Ambassador Gorak

Comrade Stalin asks Gottwald, what questions do you have to us?

Gottwald responds that they would like to discuss three main questions:

1. about participation at the Paris Conference on July 12, 1947,
2. about the Czechoslovak Republic's treaty with France,
3. about trade negotiations between the Czechoslovak delegation and the USSR Ministry of Foreign Trade.

Comrade Stalin asks Gottwald, which question they would like to begin with.

Gottwald responds that they would prefer to begin with the first question.

Comrade Stalin says that approximately two or three days after comrade V.M. Molotov returned from Paris, the Yugoslavs asked us, what should they do -whether to take part in the conference on July 12 in Paris, or not. They expressed their opinion that they were thinking about refusing to participate in that conference. Later on Romania and Bulgaria addressed us with the same question. Initially, we thought that we should recommend them to go to that conference and then to ruin it. We were convinced, on the basis of the materials that we received from our ambassadors, that under the cover of credit assistance to Europe they were organizing something like a Western bloc against the Soviet Union. Then we made a firm decision and announced our opinion to everybody that we are against participation in this conference on July 12, 1947.

We were surprised that you decided to participate in that conference. For us-this issue is the issue of friendship between the Soviet Union and the Czechoslovak Republic. Objectively, you are helping-whether you want it or not-but you are helping to isolate the Soviet Union. Look what is happening. All the countries, which have friendly relations with us, are not going to participate in that conference, while Czechoslovakia, which also enjoys friendly relations with us, will. Therefore, they will decide that the friendship between the Czechoslovak Republic and the Soviet Union is not all that solid, if it was so easy to put Czechoslovakia on the side of isolating the Soviet Union, against the Soviet Union. This would be seen as a victory over the Soviet Union. Our people and we will not understand this. You need to rescind your decision, you need to refuse to participate in this conference, and the sooner you do it - the better.

Masaryk asks Comrade Stalin to take into account that the Czechoslovak government was aware of the dependence of the Czechoslovak industry on the West. Representatives of the industries believed it was expedient to participate in the conference, so that they would not miss an opportunity to get credits. At the same time, the Polish delegation arrived in Prague and told us that they decided to participate in the conference in Paris. As a result, the decision of the Czechoslovak government to participate in the conference in Paris on July 12, 1947 was taken unanimously by all political parties.

They Masaryk continued that he was not going to deny the responsibility that he was also in favor of participating in the conference. However, he was asking to take into account that by making this decision, neither him, nor the government of the

Czechoslovak Republic wanted to do anything bad against the Soviet Union. In conclusion, Masaryk asks Comrade Stalin and Comrade Molotov to help make their situation easier.

Comrade Stalin says that we never doubted and do not doubt your friendship toward us, but objectively it looks different in reality.

Drtina says that he, on his behalf, and behalf of all the members of the party, to which he belongs, states that if our decision is against the Soviet Union, then my party does not want to, and will not do it. My party will not do anything, which would give any reason to interpret our actions, as being against the Soviet Union. At the same time, Drtina is asking to take into account that the Czechoslovak Republic is different from other Slavic countries, except the USSR, in that its export and import depends on Western countries up to 60 percent.

Comrade Stalin notes that Czechoslovakia has a passive trade balance with the West, and Czechoslovakia has to export their currency to the West.

Drtina says that he has in mind the volume of import and export, and that the people of the Czechoslovak Republics believe that if we do not participate in that conference, then we would not get the credits, and, therefore, we would lower the living standards of our population, because the trade between the Czechoslovak Republic and the Soviet Union has sharply decreased in 1947. Drtina finishes his comments with the request to help them get out of the existing situation, to increase trade with Czechoslovakia.

Comrade Stalin says that we need some goods, which we can get from Czechoslovakia, for example, pipes for petroleum industry, rails for narrow railroad cars, and so on, and we can help Czechoslovakia, i.e. we could sign a trade treaty, which would be beneficial for both sides.

Gottwald says that Czechoslovakia exports a lot of consumer and textile goods to the West, and the Soviet Union, so far, has not been buying them.

Comrade Stalin says, why, we will.

Gottwald asks Comrade Stalin and comrade Molotov to write it down in the communiqué, so that the others would see, what the Soviet Union is willing to give them as a result of this visit of the Czechoslovak delegation.

Masaryk and Drtina ask Comrade Stalin and comrade Molotov to help them to formulate their refusal to participate in the conference in Paris.

Comrade Stalin says that they need to see how the Bulgarians formulated their refusal, to consult among themselves, and to draft needed formulations of the reasons for the refusal.

On the second issue, regarding the treaty with France, Comrade Stalin says that according to Benesh's statement, it seems that we, the Soviet Union, are against the treaty of friendship and mutual assistance between Czechoslovakia and France. It is incorrect. We want Czechoslovakia to sign the treaty of friendship and the mutual assistance with France, but we also want that this treaty would not be worse than the one with the Soviet Union, with Yugoslavia, with Poland. This is what we want.

Regarding immediate assistance in the case of aggression, Comrade Stalin says that Czechoslovakia would need immediate assistance, because it is a small country.

Comrade Stalin then says that it is unclear to him, which the German satellites - such as Austria, Hungary and others - could be better as aggressors than Germany itself. History teaches us that it is not necessary that Germany should become an aggressor itself, it could do it with the help of its satellites. Consequently, the Soviet Union wants only one thing - that the agreement between the Czechoslovak Republic and France should not be weaker than the agreements that the Czechoslovak Republic has with the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia Union, and Poland.

Masaryk says that when French ambassador Dejan came to visit him, regarding the issue of the treaty of friendship and mutual assistance between the Czechoslovak Republic and France, Dejan directly told him that Czechoslovakia asks from France more than it is written in the treaty between the Soviet Union and France.

Comrade Stalin confirms that indeed, the treaty between the Soviet Union and France does not presuppose immediate assistance of the sides in the case of aggression - because of an omission on our part, but we are planning to correct this treaty in this

part. Simultaneously, we need to keep in mind that our treaty with Britain presupposes immediate assistance of the sides in case of aggression.

Gottwald says that he has several smaller questions, and that he will write to Comrade Stalin about them.

Comrade Stalin agrees.

In conclusion of the conversation, Comrade Stalin reminds Gottwald and all members of the Czechoslovak delegation that it is necessary to refuse to participate in the conference in Paris today, i.e. July 10, 1947.

Masaryk says that they will discuss this question tomorrow, and only by the evening they would be able to send their opinion to the government.

Comrade Stalin says that they would need to do it immediately.

The delegation thanks Comrade Stalin and comrade Molotov for the reception and for the needed advice, and promises to do everything as they agreed to do.

Recorded by BODROV.

Original.