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TASS Digest, 'Byrnes Speech on the Radio'

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Summary:

Byrnes speaks on the results of the first session of the Council of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs; Byrnes expressed anticipation for more productive sessions for structuring the United Nations and adhering to creating peace, mutual understanding and cooperation among states.

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BYRNES SPEECH ON THE RADIO

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"The first session of the Council of Foreign Ministers closed in a stalemate. But that need not, and should not, deprive us of a second and better chance to get on with the peace.

In the past I have been criticized and commended for being a compromiser. I confess that I do believe that peace and political progress in international affairs as in domestic affairs depend upon intelligent compromise. The United States Delegation acted in that spirit at Berlin. We acted in that spirit at London. And we shall continue to act in that spirit at future conferences.

That spirit is essential in international conferences where action can be taken only by unanimous agreement. When any one member can prevent agreement, compromise is a necessity. Men and women who have served on a jury can appreciate that.

Compromise, however, does not mean surrender, and compromise unlike surrender requires the assent of more than one party.

The difficulties encountered at the London conference will, I hope, impress upon the peoples of all countries, including our own people, the hard reality that none of us can expect to write the peace in our own way. If this hard reality is accepted by statesmen and peoples at an early stage of the peace-making process, it may at later stages save us and save the peace of the world from the disastrous effects of disillusionment and intransigences.

Regardless of how Americans may differ as to domestic policies, they desire unity in our foreign policies. This unity will be essential in the days ahead of us when we may expect differences in views by various governments as to peace settlements. However, the political party in power cannot expect this unity unless it freely consults representatives of the opposing political party.

Believing this, I requested Mr. John Foster Dulles, one of the best informed Americans in the field of foreign relations and a loyal Republican, to accompany me to London in an advisory capacity. He has been more than an adviser; he has been a partner. Between us there have been no secrets. At the Council table and in private conference he has participated in the making of all decisions. Our accord serves to show that in foreign affairs Republicans and Democrats can work together and that in vital matters of foreign policy we Americans are united.

When it was agreed at Berlin to establish the Council of Foreign Ministers I think we all had in mind the precedent of the Dumbarton Oaks conference. There, representatives of Great Britain, the Soviet Union, China, and the United States

worked together to prepare draft proposals for the United Nations Charter as a basis for discussion with other nations. France was not present at Dumbarton Oaks only because France had not yet been liberated. Her right to permanent membership on the United Nations Security Council was not questioned.

Experience reveals that a certain degree of understanding among the major powers is essential to secure general agreement among many nations. When understanding among the great powers is not achieved in advance of a conference participated in by many nations, it usually has to be secured informally during the conference.

At the Versailles conference, for example, it took the Big Three and the Big Five so long to agree among themselves that the complaint was made that the smaller powers had little more time to consider the treaty than was given to the Germans.

The Berlin agreement envisaged the naming of high-ranking deputies who could carry on the work of the Council in the absence of their chiefs, the Foreign Secretaries. The Council, as President Truman and I understood it, was to be a sort of combined staff to explore the problems and prepare proposals for the final peace settlements.

At Berlin it certainly was never intended that the three powers present or the five powers constituting the Council should take unto themselves the making of the final peace. The Berlin declaration setting up the Council begins with the statement, 'The Conference reached the following agreement for the establishment of a Council of Foreign Ministers to do the necessary preparatory work for the peace settlements.'

The Council was not to make the peace settlements but to do the necessary preparatory work for the peace settlements. It certainly was not my intention to agree to any final treaty without first getting the views of the Foreign Relations Committee of the Senate which must pass upon all treaties before ratification.

The first session of the Council, so far as the personal participation of the Foreign Ministers was concerned, was intended to provide directives for the deputies in the preparation of treaties for Italy, Rumania, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Finland.

This work was exploratory-to find out on what points we were in agreement, on what points we differed, and on what points further study and data were required. It is a little naive to suppose that when really vital differences emerge, one nation or another is likely to abandon its position on the first interchange of views.

At this stage it is as important to know and understand wherein we and our Allies differ as wherein we agree. We must understand our points of difference before we can intelligently consider means of reconciling them.

So far as the Italian treaty was concerned I think we made very good progress toward agreement on directives to govern the work of our deputies.

There was ready acceptance of our proposal that Italy should undertake to maintain a bill of rights which will secure the freedoms of speech, religious worship, political belief and public meeting envisaged for Italy in the Moscow Declaration of November 1943 and which will confirm the human rights and fundamental freedoms set forth in the Charter of the United Nations.

There was some difference among the conferees at the start as to providing for the limitation of armaments. But it was our feeling that Italy should rely on the United Nations for protection against aggression and should not engage in competition in armaments when all her resources are badly needed to restore her civilian economy.

And this view gained general acceptance.

While the very controversial boundary dispute between Yugoslavia and Italy was not settled, it was encouraging to find that it was possible to agree that the line should in the main be governed by ethnic considerations and that regardless of its sovereignty there should be a free port at Trieste under international control.

The Council was in general agreement that the Dodecanese Islands should go to Greece although the assent of one member was qualified pending the study of certain questions by his government.

There was general agreement that the Italian colonies should come under the trusteeship provisions of the United Nations Charter. Various views were expressed as to the preferred form of trusteeship for the colonies.

The American Delegation was particularly gratified that the directive to the deputies, while not restricting their studies, called for special consideration of the American proposal for a truly international administration directly responsible to the United Nations with a view to the attainment of the greatest degree of independence of the inhabitants of two of the colonies at the end of ten Years and independence for the people of a third colony at as early a date as possible.

This proposal was presented by the American Delegation when the Italian treaty first was taken up and was consistently adhered to.

It is our view that the object of a trusteeship should be to promote the self-government of the people of a colony and not to enrich a trustee or increase its economic or military power.

It was also agreed that Italian sovereignty should be restored on the conclusion of the treaty so that foreign troops may be withdrawn and, except as specially provided in the treaty, foreign controls within Italy terminated.

There was no definite understanding on reparations. The United States took the position that Italy could not pay anything like \$600,000,000. Apart from certain foreign assets, she should be required to pay as reparations only such factory and tool equipment designed for the manufacture of war implements which are not required for the limited military establishment permitted to her and which cannot be readily converted to peaceful purposes. If she is stripped of more, then her economy cannot be restored.

We have contributed several hundred million dollars for the relief of the Italian people. Their condition is deplorable. We must continue to help them. But we cannot contribute more millions, if those millions are to be used to enable Italy to pay reparations to other governments. We did that for Germany after the last war. We shall not do it again.

Substantial progress was also made on the directives for the preparatory work on the Finnish treaty and the treaties with Rumania and Bulgaria. The principles suggested by the American Delegation and accepted for the Italian treaty for the safeguarding of human rights and fundamental freedoms are also to be incorporated in these treaties.

The directives concerning the limitation of armament for Rumania and Bulgaria are expected to follow the same general line as those accepted for Italy.

Before work could be commenced upon the directives for the Hungarian treaty the Soviet Delegation announced they felt obliged to withdraw their assent to the procedure previously accepted by the Council for dealing with peace treaties.

Before taking up these procedural difficulties I should say a few words about the Soviet Delegation's disappointment with the failure of Great Britain and the United States to recognize the Bulgarian and Rumanian Governments.

The thought apparently exists in their mind that our government objects to these governments because they are friendly to the Soviet Union and that our unwillingness to recognize these governments is a manifestation of unfriendliness to the Soviet Union.

There could be no greater misconception of our attitude. I was at Yalta. The Yalta declaration on the liberated and ex-satellite countries was based on a proposal submitted by President Roosevelt. Under it the Allied Powers, including the Soviet Union, assumed the responsibility of concerting their policies to assist in the establishment of interim governments broadly representative of all important democratic elements in the population and pledged to the earliest possible establishment through free elections of governments responsive to the will of the people. That pledge cannot be fulfilled in countries where freedom of speech and of assembly are denied.

That policy sponsored by President Roosevelt was America's policy and remains America's policy.

We are well aware that no government is perfect and that the representative character of any provisional government will always be subject to debate. We do not demand perfection where perfection is unobtainable.

In an effort to concert our policies with our Allies we have tried to show a spirit of conciliation. Certainly we did not make unduly exacting the requirements we set before we recognized the Provisional Polish Government or the conditions which we have proposed as a basis for the recognition of the Provisional Hungarian Government.

And I hope that as the result of efforts now being made by the Provisional Austrian Government to broaden its representation, we may soon be able to recognize that Government.

At Berlin we stated we would examine in the near future, in the light of prevailing conditions, the question of recognition of Rumania and Bulgaria. We have investigated and we shall continue to investigate. But we cannot know whether conditions justify recognition unless our political representatives are fully informed and unless our news correspondents are permitted freely to enter countries and freely to send their stories uncensored.

We do not seek to dictate the internal affairs of any people. We only reserve for ourselves the right to refuse to recognize governments if after investigation we conclude they have not given to the people the rights pledged to them in the Yalta agreement and in the Atlantic Charter.

The peace of Europe depends upon the existence of friendly relations between the Soviet Union and its European neighbors, and two wars in one generation have convinced the American people that they have a very vital interest in the maintenance of peace in Europe.

The American Government shares the desire of the Soviet Union to have governments friendly to the Soviet Union in eastern and central Europe.

But lasting peace depends not only upon friendship between governments but upon friendship between peoples.

Had it not been for the difficulties experienced by the Allied Governments in agreeing upon a common policy in regard to the recognition of the Governments of Rumania and Bulgaria a more conciliatory spirit might possibly have prevailed and might greatly have helped to overcome the procedural difficulties of the Council.

No one present at the Council on September 11 questioned the decision taken by the Council that day inviting all five members to be present at all meetings.

Directives for the Italian treaty were under discussion for several days with China, not a party to the surrender terms, present, participating in the discussion, but not voting. No one objected.

Directives for the Finnish treaty were then considered, with the United States, France, and China present but not voting. No one objected.

Directives for the Rumanian treaty and then for the Bulgarian treaty were considered, with France and China present but not voting. No one objected.

It was only on September 22 that the Soviet Delegation took the position that the decision of the Council on September 11 violated the Berlin agreement.

It will be recalled that the Berlin agreement set up a Council of the Soviet Union, Great Britain, France, China and the United States to undertake the necessary preparatory work for the peace settlements. It provided that the Council should draw up with a view to their submission to the United Nations peace treaties with Italy, Rumania, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Finland.

It provided that in the discharge of these tasks the Council will be composed of members representing those states which were signatory to the terms of surrender imposed upon the enemy state concerned, and for the purpose of the Italian settlement, France should be regarded as signatory to the surrender terms.

The Berlin agreement further provided that other members of the Council will be invited to participate when matters directly concerning them are under discussion.

This distinction between members of the Council who were parties to the surrender terms and those who were not, was not part of the original American proposal and was reluctantly accepted by us. We were fully aware that a member would not have the right to vote if not a party to the surrender terms, but we understood from the exchange of views at the table that all members would be allowed to participate in all discussions in the Council.

It certainly never occurred to President Truman or myself that any of the five members of the Council who are also the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, which is charged with the responsibility for maintaining the peace which the Council of Foreign Ministers is preparing, would not be invited to be present during the discussions of the treaties.

Such exclusion of two permanent members of the Security Council would not promote

the harmonious relations essential to the success of the United Nations Organization.

The Soviet Delegation's position was not simply that they wished to withdraw the invitation to China and France to participate without right to vote. Their position was that it was beyond the authority of the states signatory to the surrender terms to extend the invitation.

Although this construction of the Berlin agreement did not accord with the understanding of the American Delegation or the British Delegation or the President of the United States or the Prime Minister of Great Britain, the Soviet Delegation insisted that they could no longer discuss treaty matters in the presence of members who were not parties to the surrender terms.

Thereafter the meetings of the Council for a number of days were confined to the discussion of other items on the agenda such as international inland waterways, the Ruhr, acceleration of German reparations, restitution, repatriation of Allied nationals, and the Austrian food supply.

When the general items on the agenda were exhausted, agreement had not been reached for solving the procedural obstacles which, in the view of the Soviet Delegation, made further discussion of treaty matters impossible until the decision of September 11 should be rescinded.

Since it had always been my view that the Berlin agreement contemplated a broadening out of the participants before the final conclusion of a peace treaty, I sought to find a compromise along that line.

The Berlin agreement expressly provided in section 4 of the article establishing the Council that the Council may adapt its procedures to the particular problems under discussion; that in some cases it may hold its own discussions prior to the participation of other interested states; and in other cases it may convoke a formal conference of states interested in particular problems.

I therefore proposed, with considerable reluctance, that we ask our French and Chinese colleagues to accept the position of the Soviet Delegation that the preparatory and exploratory work of the Council for the peace settlements be confined to the signatories of the surrender terms in question, provided that at the same time it should be agreed that a truly representative peace conference should be convoked before the end of the year. To ensure the calling of such a conference we thought that France and China, in the interest of peace, might make even this sacrifice.

This conference would be convoked for the purpose of considering the peace treaties with Italy, Rumania, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Finland. To the conference would be invited-

(1) The five members of the Council of Foreign Ministers which are also the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council;

(2) All European members of the United-Nations

(3) All non-European members of the United Nations which supplied substantial military contingents in the war against the European members of the Axis.

The American Delegation took the position that, in an interdependent, democratic

world, peace cannot be the exclusive concern of a few presently powerful states; that unless we were to revert to a world of isolationism none of the states which we wanted invited to the peace conference could be said to be not directly concerned in the peace.

We urged that those states, both large and small, which had fought and suffered in the war must make the peace. This has been a peoples' war and it must be a peoples' peace.

The Soviet Delegation stated, however, that they could not agree to the American proposal for a peace conference until they had returned to Moscow and had personal consultations with their Government.

It therefore became obvious that there could be no agreement unless the other delegations were prepared to yield their views and convictions to those of the Soviet Delegation. This none of the other delegations was prepared to do.

The United States is willing to dictate terms of peace to an enemy but is not willing to dictate terms of peace to its Allies.

Our task then became one of arranging an adjournment until the Soviet Delegation could return to Moscow. It is customary before adjournment to adopt and have an conferees to sign a protocol containing a record of the agreed decisions of a conference. The Soviet Delegation would not agree to the inclusion in the protocol of the decision of September 11 that the five members should participate in all meetings, even though it included a statement of the action taken by the Soviet Delegation on September 22 to withdraw their assent to that decision.

On the last day of the session the Soviet Delegation announced it would offer a compromise proposal. The proposal was that there should be four separate protocols without recording in any of them the decision of September 11 which had been agreed to by them but which they later wished to rescind. This was the same position that they had urged for days. The only thing new about it was the suggestion that on the following day they would discuss unsettled questions including the American proposal for a peace conference and the disputed September 11 decision.

In answer to a question the Soviet Foreign Minister stated that while he could discuss the proposal for a peace conference, he still was without authority to act upon it. The proposal had been discussed for a week. Further discussion without action was futile.

It was also obvious that once the four protocols were signed, it would be useless on the following day to discuss the question of inserting in the protocols the decision of September 11. An objection by the Soviet Delegation would prevent its insertion.

The Soviet Delegation also reiterated their position that they would not discuss the treaties in the presence of members they now believed to-be ineligible. This would have excluded China from the consideration of all treaties and France from the consideration of all but one without any assurance of participation in a peace conference.

It became apparent that agreement was impossible and further meetings were useless. The Chinese Foreign Minister who was presiding when the Council adjourned and at whose instance the Council had remained in session from Sunday until Tuesday, stated that under the circumstances he could not ask the Council to continue in session longer.

As the record stands the Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union has not rejected our proposal for a peace conference. During the discussions he admitted it was correct in principle. My hope is that, after he has conferred with his government, his government will agree that the nations that fought the war-the World War-shall have a chance to make the world peace.

The matter that caused the suspension of our work is no trivial or technical question. It presented an issue that had to be met. It is whether the peace shall be made by three or even five nations to the exclusion of other nations vitally concerned in the maintenance and enforcement of the peace which is being prepared.

The issue goes even deeper. The Council of Foreign Ministers acts under the unanimity rule just as the Security Council of the United Nations must act in many important matters, but in the Security Council no nation has the veto power in procedural matters while in the Council of Foreign Ministers one nation can veto all action.

The veto power is a great power and should not be lightly exercised. We are willing to make many concessions but the United States does not believe in agreement at any price.

The power of veto in procedural matters should not be used by the United States or any other nation to coerce the judgment and conscience of fellow nations.

Peace must be based upon mutual understanding and mutual respect. It can not be secured by procedural maneuverings which obscure from the people the real and vital issues upon which their peace depends.

Undeterred by temporary set-backs and ever willing to accord to others that tolerant understanding that we wish others to accord to us, we must not relax in our efforts to achieve a just and lasting peace for ourselves and all nations. 'With firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in.'