

October 24, 1945

**TASS News Summary, 'The Australian Press About
"Rumors Concerning the Death of Stalin"'**

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Summary:

Reports of widespread rumors of that Stalin is ill.

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THE AUSTRALIAN PRESS ABOUT "RUMORS CONCERNING THE DEATH OF STALIN"

SYDNEY, 23 October (TASS). On 23 October the newspaper Daily Mirror which comes out in Sydney published a report of Baum, its European commentator in London, under a big headline, "Rumors about the death of Stalin"...A wedge has been driven in the demands of the Reds"...Concern about a split among the Allies". The report says:

"Rumors about the death of Stalin are circulating in Southeastern Europe and are causing concern among Soviet officials. However, on 22 October a representative of the Soviet Embassy in Paris again denied that these rumors correspond to reality. Evidently these widespread rumors are the result of the unsuccessful demands of the Soviet Union on the Western Allies. Stalin is concerned about the Allies' refusal to agree to the demand that the Balkans be considered a Soviet zone of influence. There is nothing strange in Minister of Foreign Affairs Molotov invested with some of Stalin's authority, for this is in agreement with the supreme laws of the Soviet Union and the Constitution. Last week Molotov flew to Georgia to meet with Stalin. Two members of Stalin's brain trust, Andreyev and Zhdanov, flew with him. They were summoned by Stalin for an urgent meeting on political questions.

The coincidence between the Anglo-American demarche with respect to Hungary and the "meeting" in Georgia is evidently explained by the fact that the Soviet Union has lost the political initiative to some degree. Also, as the Allies refused to agree to Soviet demands with respect to the Balkans they do not recognize the extraordinary demands of the Soviet Union with respect to Turkey. Thus, now in connection with the rumors about Stalin one can perceive the basic difficulty which has occurred at the conference in London. However, Stalin will speak on the anniversary of the October Revolution. He is working on the text of his radio speech, [his] first public statement after the end of the war. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in London hopes that Stalin will make use of this occasion so the London conference gets out of a deadlock, for it expects that he will make a quite important statement about Soviet postwar policy. The "Big Three" have split into two parts" for the time being.

The newspaper "The Sun", which comes out in Sydney, also published a report about these rumors in the following interpretation: "According to a report of a correspondent of the London newspaper "Daily Mail" from Vienna these rumors have caused something like a crisis in the Soviet high command; however, among the personnel cases of desertion are taking place on a large scale".

THE REUTER AGENCY ON RUMORS IN THE US ABOUT AN ILLNESS OF COMRADE STALIN

LONDON, 23 October. As the Reuter agency transmits from Washington a US State Department representative declared on 23 October that neither the State Department nor the US War Department has received any information from Moscow which could confirm or deny reports that Generalissimo Stalin is ill or has died. A representative of the Soviet Embassy told a Reuter agency correspondent, "I have not heard anything of the sort".

REPORT OF THE FRENCH PRESS

PARIS, 22 October (TASS). Most of today's newspapers have published a report from the American press about an illness of Comrade Stalin under the headline: "Stalin is dying".

CONCERNING RUMORS ABOUT COMRADE STALIN

LONDON, 23 October (TASS). The "Daily Mail" is playing up reports from New York, especially the reactions of Americans to rumors that Stalin is ill. Evidently this question is evoking much more interest in the United States than in Britain and up to now only the "Daily Mail" is devoting attention to these fantastic rumors. The following headlines tell of the content of these reports: "Strange rumors are being spread in the Red Army", but a report under the headline 'The leader is dead' is being denied. 'Stalin is ill', it says in a New York report". Along with these reports of the New York correspondent [Eaddon], the same fantastic report of a Vienna correspondent of the "Daily Mail", Rona Churchill, is being carried, who writes in pompous expressions that "a 'battle for power is going on' between the marshals of the Red Army for who will inherit Stalin's leadership. She declares that Zhukov, who is a 'Party general', is being given the advantage. She also writes about a crisis in the midst of the Russian high command and quite widespread desertion among the enlisted men. They think that at least 3,000 Russians have deserted in Vienna and 10,000 in Berlin".

RADIO BROADCASTS

ANKARA, Turkish, 23 October, transcript.

Information coming in about the state of health of Marshal Stalin has a contradictory nature. It is pointed out that Marshal Stalin is not in Moscow and he is not engaged in state affairs on the previous scale. Marshal Stalin is being treated in the south of Russia. The state of his health attracted attention back during the time of the Berlin Conference. From time to time meetings of the conference were postponed because of the state of his health. Leaving Berlin, Marshal Stalin complained of fatigue. Since those times the state of his health has caused alarm. For now there is no information on who will be his successor. Recently the name of Marshal Zhukov, who at one time planned to go to America, is often mentioned, but he abandoned the trip and the US government was notified of this. Stalin's illness and Zhukov's abandonment of the trip to America are interrelated.

ANKARA, Turkish, 23 October, transcript.

Paris radio, referring to a report from London, points out that the following information has been received in the Soviet Embassy in London about the state of health of Marshal Stalin. In view of the fatigue of Marshal Stalin he and his daughter are vacationing in the south of Russia. The condition of Marshal Stalin's health is improving. As soon as his vacation ends he will return to his previous work. The possibility is not excluded that Marshal Stalin will shed the responsibilities of a marshal from himself.

Three copies printed

1st copy - to Cde. I. V. Stalin
2nd copy - to Cde. V. M. Molotov
3rd copy - to file.

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