

J. V. Stalin

Exchange of Messages Between Mr. E. Bevin and J. V. Stalin, Concerning the Anglo-Soviet Treaty

January 19 and January 22, 1947

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On January 18, 1947, Mr. Bevin, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Great Britain, through the medium of the British Ambassador in the U.S.S.R., Sir M. Peterson, conveyed the following message to J. V. Stalin, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the U.S.S.R.:—

I am gratified at the friendly reception which was given to the Chief of the Imperial General Staff in Moscow and am studying with interest the account which he has given me of his conversations with you.

We are however disturbed at the suggestion which you made to him that the Anglo-Soviet Treaty of Alliance and Post-War Collaboration might be regarded in London as "suspended in the air" since it might be regarded as superseded by the United Nations Organisation. This view has been attributed to me personally in the most misleading manner by *Pravda* in an article of January 15, which takes out of its context and misinterprets one sentence in my broadcast of December 22. In fact, I said what all the other major Allies have said, namely, that they based their policy on the United Nations Organisation.

I cannot understand what is behind this line of reasoning, and I am more amazed at the *Pravda* article since I understand from Field-Marshal Montgomery that you said this was not your own view regarding the Treaty. It is certainly not my view either.

Since *Pravda* has published this misleading article, I have no alternative but to issue a statement which I should like you to see in advance, making the views of His Majesty's Government clear once again on this subject. I propose to publish it on the morning of January 20.

On January 23, 1947, J. V. Stalin, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the U.S.S.R., sent to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Great Britain the following message in reply, which was handed to Mr. Bevin by the Soviet Ambassador in London, G. N. Zarubin, on January 23:—

I have received your message of January 18. I must admit that your statement that Great Britain is not tied to anybody except in regard to her obligations arising from the Charter caused me some perplexity.

It seems to me that such a statement without a corresponding explanation can be used by the enemies of Anglo-Soviet friendship. For one it is clear that no matter what reservations there are in the Anglo-Soviet Treaty, and no matter how these reservations weaken the significance of the Treaty in the post-war period, the existence of the Anglo-Soviet Treaty imposes obligations on our countries.

It was just these circumstances that I had in mind when I stated on September 17, 1946, in my interview with Mr. Alexander Worth, that “the Soviet Union is bound with Great Britain by the Treaty of Mutual Assistance against German aggression” and, that means, has obligations with regard to Great Britain, not counting the obligations arising from the Charter.

However, your message and the statement of the British Government completely explain the affair and do not leave any room for misunderstandings. It is now clear that you and I share the same view-point with regard to the Anglo-Soviet Treaty.

As regards the extension of the Anglo-Soviet Treaty, to which special reference is made in the British Government’s statement, I must say that if one is to speak seriously of such an extension, then, before extending this Treaty, it is necessary to change it, freeing it from the reservations which weaken this Treaty. Only after such a procedure would it be possible to talk seriously of an extension of the Treaty.

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