

November 15, 1945

TASS Report Distributed to Cdes. I.V. Stalin, V.M. Molotov, A.I. Mikoyan, L.P. Beria, G.M. Malenkov, and A. Ya. Vyshinsky, 'Byrnes' Statement at a Press Conference'

Citation:

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Summary:

TASS reports on a press conference given by United States Secretary of State James Byrnes at which he spoke about conflicts between the Soviet Union and the United States over the control mechanism and Far East Commission in Japan in addition to other foreign policy issues.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Blavatnik Family Foundation

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

[stamp: Secret
Department of TASS]

Top Secret

BYRNES' STATEMENT AT A PRESS CONFERENCE

WASHINGTON, 14 November (TASS). US Secretary of State Byrnes, speaking at a press conference, reported that talks with the Soviet Union concerning the Soviet proposal about a control council in Japan continue, but Molotov's reply to the American appeal shows that agreement has still not been reached. The question is that the Soviet Union is insisting on the employment of the principle of unanimity, but the United States has decided not to repeat the experience of the Council in Germany in which the objections of one power obstruct the accomplishment of an entire series of measures corresponding to the Potsdam agreement.

In Byrnes' words, the Soviet Union is again asserting that the Council in Japan should be basically like the Council in Germany, and that all decisions should be made on the basis of unanimous agreement. According to Byrnes' statement this administrative principle employed in Germany is unsuccessful, and the United States insists that MacArthur have the ability to act. The United States welcomes the creation of a control council, but this council should be organized so as to ensure the ability to carry out measures to implement the surrender terms.

In response to the question of Byrnes' position in London, when Molotov proposed creating a control council in Japan, Byrnes said that he took such a position inasmuch as he was not able to discuss this question before returning to Washington and a conversation with the President. Byrnes said that he would like there to be a Control Council in Tokyo, but thinks that the Consultative Commission which, in his opinion, should also be in Tokyo, should work out the policy which will be recommended to MacArthur. Then Byrnes reported that in response to the Soviet proposal the United States has offered several other proposals which are being discussed at the present time. However, Byrnes refused to report the substance of these proposals.

Byrnes also reported that Ethridge met with Vyshinsky in Moscow, but Byrnes was not confident that Ethridge would resume his discussions in Bulgaria and Romania before returning to Washington. Byrnes assumes that Ethridge will return in several weeks and make an exhaustive report.

Then Byrnes reported that [Grady], a former Assistant Secretary of State, was going to Greece today, and that this trip was provisional and connected with the upcoming American observation of the future elections.

In reply to questions concerning the civil war in China, Byrnes declared that the United States neither discussed the question of how to stop this conflict with Chongqing nor with Moscow, and expressed regret about the existence of this conflict. In Byrnes' words, in accordance with the Lend-Lease Agreement, the United States promised to supply China with a certain amount of equipment after the war and, as General Wedemeyer reported, Chongqing troops are sending the aircraft delivered in accordance with this Agreement and serviced by teams consisting of Chinese to the north.

In reply to a question concerning Anglo-American discussions on economic issues Byrnes said that the participants of the discussions agreed not to report anything as long as it is impossible to announce an agreement as a whole.

In reply to a question, did he think that Stalin was ill, or had given up some of his powers, Byrnes said that he had no information about an illness of Stalin and that Harriman had reported that twice when he had seen Stalin the latter seemed well. Then Byrnes added that new reports had appeared in the press that Stalin had fallen ill after Harriman had seen him, but the State Department had no information about this. In reply to a question that according to available information the Argentinian Minister of Foreign Affairs had asserted that the Soviet Union had indirectly sounded out Argentina from the point of view of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Argentina and the Soviet Union, Byrnes replied that he knew nothing about the Soviet Union's desire to establish diplomatic relations with Argentina.

In reply to the question, why did Ambassador Kirk come to Washington from Rome, Byrnes said that Kirk was not in the US long and that his actual arrival has no special significance.

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15 November 1945

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