

May 17, 1944

Stalin and Professor Lange Discuss Poland

Citation:

"Stalin and Professor Lange Discuss Poland", May 17, 1944, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Container 172, W. Averell Harriman Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. <https://digitalarchive.umd.edu/document/219884>

Summary:

Professor Oscar Lange briefs the U.S. Embassy in Moscow about his meeting with Stalin to discuss Polish affairs.

Original Language:

English

Contents:

Original Scan
Transcript - English

44-05-17

AMBASSADOR'S COPY

138

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Conversation.

May 18, 1944

Present: Professor Lange
Mr. Hamilton

Subject: Professor Lange's talk with Marshal Stalin.

Professor Lange telephoned this afternoon and asked to call. When he arrived, he told me that he had decided to leave for the United States on next Monday and that on his return trip he was to stop to visit a Polish community somewhere near Novosibirsk.

Professor Lange said that last night he had seen Marshal Stalin, that Mr. Molotov had been present, and that the conversation had lasted for about an hour and a half. He said that Marshal Stalin had asked him what opinion he had formed as to the sincerity of the statements the Soviet Government had made with respect to Poland. Professor Lange said that he had replied that he based his judgment of Soviet policy on what he had seen of the members of the Polish Army in the Soviet Union, that these men obviously looked forward to and believed in an independent Poland, and that they were not puppets of the Soviet Union. Professor Lange said that Marshal Stalin had said that he favored not only an independent Poland but also a strong Poland. Marshal Stalin had commented in regard to Polish frontier questions. He had said that East Prussia and territory to the west as far as and including Stettin should go to Poland and that parts of Silesia should also be given to Poland. He talked as though this was not only his own view but one which was held also by the British Government and the American Government. As to Poland's boundaries on the east, Professor Lange said that he had asked a direct question about Lwow and had referred to the fact that the Poles seemed to feel very strongly about the retention of Lwow by Poland. Marshal Stalin had replied that this would have to be studied and remarked that it would raise the question of demands from the Ukraine and the question of Ukrainian nationalism to which Stalin apparently felt that as a result of the sacrifices of the Ukraine during the war special attention should be given.

Professor Lange said that Marshal Stalin had raised the question whether it might not be a good idea for

Professor

Reproduced from the Collections of the Manuscript Division, Library of Congress

CONFIDENTIAL
Approved for Release by NSA on 05-08-2014 pursuant to E.O. 13526
Declassify in part and exclude from automatic downgrading and declassification
EO 12958, Sec. 1.4
ACCORDANCE

-2-

Professor Lange, after his return to the United States, to make a trip to London to talk with members of the Polish Government there and tell them what he had seen in the Soviet Union, the views of members of the Polish armed forces here, and the statements which Marshal Stalin was making to Professor Lange. Marshal Stalin advanced the view that possibly Professor Lange as a private citizen might do some good by making such a trip, at least he could make the trip without commitment and talk without commitment. Professor Lange said that Marshal Stalin had mentioned that his only means of getting his views before the Polish Government in London was through the British Government, that he never knew exactly how these views were presented, and that possibly sometimes the British Government had some ideas of its own on the matter, and that it might be useful if a private American citizen who was not directly party to the matter and who did not represent a government would himself talk to the Polish leaders in London and tell them of his visit to the Soviet Union. Marshal Stalin suggested that Professor Lange talk also to Sosnkowski and find out what he had in mind. Marshal Stalin did not think it a good idea for Professor Lange to go to London directly from the Soviet Union as that might carry an implication that Professor Lange was carrying out some mission or some message from the Soviet Government. When Professor Lange had asked whether there was any chance of an understanding being reached between the Soviet Government and the Polish Government in London, Marshal Stalin had replied, according to Professor Lange, that the door was always open to an understanding.

Professor Lange said that when he got to the United States he thought he would take up with the State Department the question of his making the trip to London for the purpose of discussions with members of the Polish Government there.

Professor Lange said that Stalin was disappointed at a recent speech made by Mikolajczyk and that Stalin thought Mikolajczyk had displayed in this speech a very anti-Soviet attitude.

Professor Lange said that Marshal Stalin had told him of some contacts which had taken place between the

Red

-3-

Red Army and the Polish underground. Marshal Stalin had said that a few leaders of the Polish underground had gotten in touch with the Red Army to offer and discuss cooperation; that the Soviet reply had been that they welcomed cooperation but that the Polish underground should function under the military leadership and direction of the Red Army; that the underground leaders had then left and that nothing further had been heard from them but that individual members of the Polish underground, men in ranks, had come over and joined the Red Army. This had been done in small groups. Professor Lange said that Marshal Stalin was supremely confident that the Red Army would be welcomed by the Polish people as it entered Polish territory and drove the Germans out of it. Marshal Stalin had said that he would not set up an ANGOT in Poland.

With regard to Germany, various comments were made during the talk with Stalin. One school of thought was to the effect that Germany might be treated in such a way that Germans would be satisfied and therefore would not wish to engage in further attempts at aggression. Another school of thought was to the effect that Germany should be rendered powerless to engage in further aggression. Professor Lange said that Stalin favored the second school of thought. Professor Lange said that he had commented to Stalin that the only way to insure Germany being rendered powerless and kept powerless to engage in further aggression was for there to be firm understanding and cooperation between the Soviet Union, the United States, and Great Britain. Professor Lange said that in this connection Stalin had commented that cooperation and understanding between the Soviet Union, the United States, and Great Britain was not a matter of expediency but was being established on firm and permanent lines and on a solid foundation. //

Professor Lange said that Marshal Stalin had said that the trouble with France was that the French were not patriotic and were not willing to make sacrifices for their country; that a regeneration was taking place but that it would require a long time.

Professor Lange said that he would like to send a message to the Minister of Labor in the Polish Government in London, who is now in the United States where

he

-4-

he has been attending the ILO Conference in Philadelphia, suggesting that he remain in the United States until Professor Lange returned. Professor Lange thought that if this Polish official knew that Professor Lange was returning soon, he would wait to see Professor Lange. Professor Lange said that he would like to have a talk with this man. He wondered how best to communicate with him. I inquired whether he had thought of sending a telegram through normal channels. I said that the service was good. Professor Lange was somewhat afraid that the fact that he had sent a message might become known to the press at home. He referred to the fact that the present British restrictions on entry and exit of persons might cause this Polish official to remain in the United States for the time. Professor Lange said that he would give further thought to the question of sending a message either directly or through his wife.

Professor Lange said that he had prepared a short statement to give the press here, who had been after him a great deal to make some statement. He gave me the statement to read. In the first part there was set forth the circumstances under which he had come to the Soviet Union, that he had been invited by the Union of Polish Patriots, and a statement of what he had done here. He expressed thanks to the Union of Polish Patriots, to Wanda Wasilewska, and to Mr. Molotov. He mentioned that he had seen Marshal Stalin and Mr. Molotov. In the last paragraph he extended good wishes to the Polish Army in the Soviet Union in their fight against Germany, the common enemy of the Soviet Union and the United States. When Professor Lange asked me for my comment I told him that I could make no comment in regard to his proposed statement, that he had come to the Soviet Union as a private American citizen, that he had come here as a guest and at the invitation of the Soviet Government, that the United States Government recognized the Polish Government in London, that that was the situation when he left home and it of course was still the situation. He said that he did not wish to say anything that would embarrass the United States Government and I simply repeated part of what I had previously said.

We chatted for a few minutes more and then Professor Lange left, saying that he would drop in at some time on Saturday to say goodbye.

MMH:els

Ambassador's Copy

CONFIDENTIAL

Conversation.□□□□□□

May 18, 1944

Present: Professor Lange

□ Mr. Hamilton

Subject: Professor Lange's talk with Marshal Stalin.

□ Professor Lange telephoned this afternoon and asked to call. When he arrived, he told me that he had decided to leave for the United States on next Monday and that on his return trip he was to stop to visit a Polish community somewhere near Novosibirsk.

□ Professor Lange said that last night he had seen Marshal Stalin, that Mr. Molotov had been present, and that the conversation had lasted for about an hour and a half. He said that Marshal Stalin had asked him what opinion he had formed as to the sincerity of the statements the Soviet Government had made with respect to Poland. Professor Lange said that he had replied that he based his judgment of Soviet policy on what he had seen of the members of the Polish Army in the Soviet Union, that these men obviously looked forward to and believed in an independent Poland, and that they were not puppets of the Soviet Union. Professor Lange said that Marshal Stalin had said that he favored not only an independent Poland but also a strong Poland. Marshal Stalin had commented in regard to Polish frontier questions. He had said that East Prussia and territory to the west as far as and including Stettin should go to Poland and that parts of Silesia should also be given to Poland. He talked as though this was not only his own view but one which was held also by the British Government and the American Government. As to Poland's boundaries on the east, Professor Lange said that he has asked a direct question about Lwow and had referred to the fact that the Poles seemed to feel very strongly about the retention of Lwow by Poland. Marshal Stalin had replied that this would have to be studied and remarked that it would raise the question of demands from the Ukraine and the question of Ukrainian nationalism to which Stalin apparently felt that as a result of the sacrifices of the Ukraine during the war special attention should be given.

□ Professor Lange said that Marshal Stalin had raised the question whether it might not be a good idea for Professor Lange, after his return to the United States, to make a trip to London to talk with members of the Polish Government there and tell them what he had seen in the Soviet Union, the views of members of the Polish armed forces here, and the statements which Marshal Stalin was making to Professor Lange. Marshal Stalin advanced the view that possible Professor Lange as a private citizen might do some good by making such a trip, at least he could make the trip without commitment and talk without commitment. Professor Lange said that Marshal Stalin had mentioned that his only means of getting his views before the Polish Government in London was through the British Government, that he never knew exactly how these views were presented, and that possibly sometimes the British Government had some ideas of its own on the matter, and that it might be useful if a private American citizen who was not directly party to the matter and who did not represent a government would himself talk to the Polish leaders in London and tell them of his visit to the Soviet Union. Marshal Stalin suggested that Professor Lange talk also to Sosnkowski and find out what he had in mind. Marshal Stalin did not think it a good idea for Professor Lange to go to London directly from the Soviet Union as that might carry an implication that Professor Lange was carrying out some mission or some message from the Soviet Government. When Professor Lange had asked whether there was any chance of an understanding being reached between the Soviet Government and the Polish Government in London, Marshal Stalin has replied, according to Professor Lange, that the door was always open to an understanding.

□ Professor Lange said that when he got to the United States he thought he would take up with the State Department the question of his making the trip to London for the purpose of discussions with members of the Polish Government there.

□ Professor Lange said that Stalin was disappointed at a recent speech made by Mikolajczyk and that Stalin thought Mikolajczyk had displayed in this speech a very anti-Soviet attitude.

□

□ Professor Lange said that Marshal Stalin had told him of some contacts which had taken place between the Red Army and the Polish Underground. Marshal Stalin had said that a few leaders of the Polish Underground had gotten in touch with the Red Army to offer and discuss cooperation; that the Soviet reply had been that they welcomed cooperation but that the Polish underground should function under the military leadership and direction of the Red Army; that the underground leaders had then left and that nothing further had been heard from them but that individual members of the Polish underground, men in ranks, had come over and joined the Red Army. Professor Lange said that Marshal Stalin was supremely confident that the Red Army would be welcomed by the Polish people as it entered Polish territory and drove the Germans out of it. Marshal Stalin had said that he would not set up an AMGOT in Poland.

□ With regard to Germany, various comments were made during the talk with Stalin. One school of thought was to the effect that Germany might be treated in such a way that Germans would be satisfied and therefore would not wish to engage in further attempts at aggression. Another school of thought was to the effect that Germany should be rendered powerless to engage in further aggression. Professor Lange said that Stalin favored the second school of thought. Professor Lange said that he has commented to Stalin that the only way to insure Germany being rendered powerless and kept powerless to engage in further aggression was there to be firm understanding and cooperation between the Soviet Union, the United States, and Great Britain was not a matter of expediency but was being established on firm and permanent lines and on a solid foundation.

□ Professor Lange said that Marshal Stalin had said that the trouble with France was that the French were not patriotic and were not willing to make sacrifices for their country; that a regeneration was taking place but that it would require a long time.

□ Professor Lange said that he would like to send a message to the Minister of Labor in the Polish Government in London, who is now in the United States where he has been attending the ILO Conference in Philadelphia, suggesting that he remain in the United States until Professor Lange returned. Professor Lange thought that if the Polish official knew that Professor Lange was returning soon, he would wait to see Professor Lange. Professor Lange said that he would like to have a talk with this man. He wondered how best to communicate with him. I inquired whether he has thought of sending a telegram through normal channels. I said that the service was good. Professor Lange was somewhat afraid that the fact that he sent a message might become known to the press at home. He referred to the fact that the present British restrictions on entry and exit of persons might cause this Polish official to remain in the United States for the time. Professor Lange said that he would give further thought to the question of sending a message either directly or through his wife.

□ Professor Lange said that he had prepared a short statement to give the press here, who had been after him a great deal to make some statement. He gave me the statement to read. In the first part there was set forth the circumstances under which he had come to the Soviet Union, that he had been invited by the Union of Polish Patriots, and a statement of what he had done here. He expressed thanks to the Union of Polish Patriots, to Wanda Wasilewska, and to Mr. Molotov. In the last paragraph he extended good wishes to the Polish Army in the Soviet Union in their

fight against Germany, the common enemy of the Soviet Union and the United States. When Professor Lange asked me for any comment I told him that I could make no comment in regard to his proposed statement, that he had come to the Soviet Union as a private American citizen, that he had come here as a guest and at the invitation of the Soviet Government, that the United States Government recognized the Polish Government in London, that that was the situation when he left home and it of course was still the situation. He said that he did not wish to say anything that would embarrass the United States Government and I simply repeated part of what I had previously said.

□ We chatted for a few minutes more and then Professor Lange left, saying that he would drop in at some time on Saturday to say goodbye.

MMH: els