

January 17, 1947
**Report to Washington on Montgomery's
Conversation with Stalin**

Citation:

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Summary:

Montgomery and Stalin discuss the possibility for future UK-USSR cooperation and ongoing US-UK relations.

Original Language:

English

Contents:

Transcript - English

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Conversation with Stalin

[This telegram is of particular secrecy and should be retained by the authorized recipient and not passed on]

Cypher/OTP□□□□□□
DIPLOMATIC SECRET

□FROM FOREIGN OFFICES TO WASHINGTON

D. 5.25 17th January 1947
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IMMEDIATE

TOP SECRET

□□My immediately preceding telegram.

□□Following is summary of interview between Generalissimo Stalin and Field Marshall Montgomery.

□□After visiting the chief Russian Military Academies and meeting the chief Russian Marshals during the first days of his visit (when nothing of political interest transpired) the C.I.G.S. was received by Stalin in private audience on January 10th. The interview lasted about an hour.

□□2. Field Marshal Montgomery opened the discussion by referring to the comradeship in arms which had grown up between the British and American armies and commanders during the war, and he stressed this association had naturally continued into the post-war period. He felt that this fact should be put to better use and that the fighting men of each nation might help the politicians who were wrestling with the difficult problems of the post-war period, by maintaining and developing their respective armies and thus help to eliminate suspicion and mistrust, Stalin expressed himself in agreement.

□□3. The C.I.G.S. went on to say that for this reason he had come to Russia to establish friendly contacts with the Red Army; he had been much gratified by his reception and the friendliness he experienced led him to hop that with Stalin's encouragement the relations between the British Army and the Red Army might be further improved. He had invited the Soviet Marshals to pay a visit to England next spring and the next step would, he though, be an exchange of Officers between the respective military schools. Such a scheme would have to develop gradually but a start should be made soon, even if it was only a question of one or two officers to be exchanged. Stalin said he was interested in this scheme, but considered that the time had not yet come for an interchange of Officers since such a action might be misunderstood in political circles and he might be blackguarded in the world press for being war-monger.

□□4. The conversation then turned to the close relations between the United States' and British Forces. Stalin said he realized how closely linked the two armies were in the matter of exchange of information, and he also understood there was a definite military alliance or agreement with the United States. He assumed there was such an alliance or agreement. He asked Field Marshal Montgomery if he would care to say anything about that. He added that he did not in the least object to such an alliance

provided it was not directed against the Soviet Union.

□□5. The C.I.G.S. in reply explained how the "standardization" of weapons had grown up during the war, and emphasized that this had not been based on any rigid plan nor could there be any question of it being connected with any sinister designs on the part of the United States or of His Majesty's Government. He added that after the end of the war His Majesty's Government had begun to consider adopting certain types of American weapons and making them in British factories. He said he would be glad to study the adoption of similar arrangements between the British and Soviet armies. Field Marshal Montgomery then assured Stalin, speaking as head of the British Army, that there existed no military alliance or agreement or comprehensive plan for the standardisation of weapons and equipment between Great Britain and the U.S.A. Stalin assured the Field Marshal that he accepted this statement.

□□6. Stalin told the C.I.G.S. in this connexion that he had no objection to an Anglo-American Military alliance, provided that it was not directed against Russia. He added that he himself had alliances with France and other countries. In the case of France had had consulted Mr. Churchill and had only gone ahead with the alliance when Mr. Churchill said he agreed. For his part he would have no objection to a British alliance with France or any other country provided (a) it was not directed against Russia and (b) that he was consulted first as he had consulted His Majesty's Government.

□□7. The C.I.G.S. then asked Stalin in connexion with what Stalin had previously said about military alliances, whether he thought there should be a military alliance between Britain and Russia. Stalin replied "that is what I would like and I think it is essential". The C.I.G.S. referred to the Anglo-Soviet Treaty of Alliance of 1943 and said he was under the impression that it was still in force. Stalin gave the following explanation of his views on that treaty. The Treaty was in two parts. Part One provided for mutual co-operation and combined action in the war against Germany; the war against Germany was now over and therefore Part One of the Treaty had ceased to apply. Part Two provided for mutual assistance and non-aggression for a period of 20 years after the end of the German war or until some world organisation or League of Nations had been formed and was in working order. The U.N.O. had been formed and was now in working order and therefore Part Two was in theory "suspended in the air". Although however the whole Treaty was theoretically in suspense, it had been provided that it remained operative until an agreement to that effect had been signed. Since no such agreement had been signed the situation was not clear. When the C.I.G.S. asked Stalin if he would wish him to inform the Prime Minister that Stalin would like a new Treaty and Military Alliance with Britain, he replied that he would welcome a military alliance and considered it was very necessary, but did not wish to charge the C.I.G.S. with any official commission for His Majesty's Government on this subject. He had no objection, however, to the Field Marshal quoting his views.

□□8. The C.I.G.S. then explained to Stalin the reasons for the continued existence of the Combined Chiefs-of-Staff Organisation. He referred to the manner in which it had grown up during the war and explained that there were a great number of problems still to be handled which required Anglo-American collaboration; these problems were of an administrative order and connected with the aftermath of the war and no operational subjects were under discussion: no doubt when these problems had been disposed of the respective Governments would review the necessity for the continued existence of the Combined-Chiefs-of-Staff Organisation.

□□9. Field Marshal Montgomery dined in the Kremlin as the guest of Stalin the same evening. No important political or military subjects were discussed. Stalin said in conversation that he was delighted that General Marshall had become Secretary of State as soldiers of experience made very good politicians.

□□(This telegram has also been distributed to members of the Cabinet.)