TOP SECRET SECURITY INFORMATION

FROM: New York
TO: Secretary of State
NO: 273, September 26, 11:45 p.m.

PRIORITY

BYTES ONLY FOR NICKERSON (UNA)

Re: conversation with Malik and Zorin re Korea.

On basis procedure authorized by Dept and discussed with you yesterday, I talked last night following SO dinner with Malik and Zorin.

Following is summary of conversation:

While I was chatting with Malik about inconsequential matters, Zorin joined us and Malik introduced me to him with a joking comment about the many talks we had had together without persuading one another. I replied that none of us had found his speeches in SG or on the radio very persuasive and wondered whether Zorin would make the same kind of speeches, including another radio speech next June 23rd. Malik laughed and translated my question into Russian for Zorin. Malik said, "That's a long time to wait." I commented that a long time had passed since Malik had made his radio speech on June 23, 1951, to which he made the expected rejoinder, "Whose fault is that?"

I expressed astonishment at his question in view of fact that our position on the one remaining issue in the armistice negotiations was solidly based on a principle to which the Sov Govt itself had adhered ever since 1928. I added it must be obvious to Sov Govt that we could not and would not abandon the principle and it was simply a question to expect us to agree to forcible repatriation of POWs. I therefore professed confusion concerning the present apparent attitude of the Sov Govt toward this question and thought it difficult to reach any conclusion other than that the Sov Govt did not really wish to see an armistice.

After making a brief disclaimer that the Sov Govt could speak for the Chinese and NK's, Malik said that "the situation in Korea is entirely different" than was the case when the Sov Govt made treaties after the first world war. He said, "at that time..."
that time there were no puppet regimes like Syngman Rhee being manipulated by the USA." I said I could not understand this reply but he evaded attempts to get him to clarify. He appeared uncomfortable and unwilling to be drawn too deeply into this particular question.

At this moment someone else joined our group and it was suggested we join the other guests in the reception room. When we did so, I left Malik and Zorin in order to avoid appearance of pressuring the conversation. Malik followed me, took my arm and led me to a small table in a corner where we sat down and had the remainder of our conversation. A few minutes after we began, Zorin rejoined us and, as before, listened intently without speaking. The following conversation lasted about half an hour.

Malik said, "It is clear to everybody that the US does not want an armistice and that is why the US talks about the so-called principle of non-forcible repatriation." Speaking vehemently, he repeatedly referred to Pres. Truman's statement that we would never agree to forcible repatriation. Malik asked, "Could such a public statement by the President create a condition in which an armistice is possible?"

Malik went on: "Moreover, Secy Atcheson says that agreements with Sov Union are not worth the paper they are written on. The US Govt and Wall Street refuse to have an armistice, as was shown by info that immediately after my June 23rd speech, three million dollars was lost on Wall Street."

I replied that the President's statement was nothing more or less than an honest announcement which reflected the attitude of the whole American people and that I myself knew from discussions with foreign dels, including many from Asia and Africa, that there was general world-wide support for the UN refusal to repatriate prisoners forcibly. As to his statement that the US did not want an armistice, our record at Panmunjon showed this was completely false. However, I could not see the advantage of exchanging words re the motives of either side. The question was how intentions of both sides could be tested, and if the other side suggested any reasonable and fair procedures consistent with our firm intention not to surrender the principle, I was certain such proposals would be sincerely examined. Our negotiators at Panmunjon tried to make this as clear as possible, but the only reply from the other side has been propaganda attacks and refusal either to consider or suggest objective procedures consistent with the UN principle. I referred to the offers which had been made to establish any fair and impartial method for determining the true wishes of individuals and expressed the conviction that the world
that the world would judge the sincerity of both sides by
their willingness or unwillingness to work out such procedures.

Malik and Zorin exchanged some comments in Russian, after
which Malik asked, with an ironic tone, "How can you talk
about impartial and objective procedures? No matter who was
present, every prisoner would know that if he gave the wrong
answer and if there were no armistice, he would remain under
USA bayonets."

I replied this was an excellent illustration of what I was
talking about since if this were the sort of problem worrying
the other side, why did they not suggest procedures for our
consideration which might eliminate such difficulties?

Malik translated my reply to Zorin but instead of responding,
shifted to a different tack.

He said there was a great deal of talk now about what might
be done with prisoners who are not returned. Malik sorn-
fully referred to a conversation he had held with Padilla
Nervo re the Mex suggestion. He had asked Padilla Nervo,
"Who are the neutrals you are talking about? In Mexico one
of them? Is Formosa another?" Malik said that Padilla
"looked nervous" and was not able to answer.

I said we had known nothing about the intention of the Mex
Govt to make such a proposal but I was sure that they were
sincerely anxious to find some basis on which the question
could be resolved without surrendering the principle. I did
not know whether their suggestion was practicable but if it
were not, why did not the other side make suggestions of
their own? Malik's only reply was that he had not said that
the US knew of the Mex proposals before they were made. I
said I thought the crucial point is that we would not alter
our stand against forcible repatriation, and that this meant
inevitably that unless the other side either accepted reason-
able procedures we had suggested or proposed other procedures
equally reasonable, the future looked very black. Malik re-
piled, "That is up to you. Why not let the Chineses prisoners
go home instead of killing them on Koje Island?" He pro-
ceeded to make a long and familiar tirade on the subject of
"atrocities", etc. and I made the usual reply. I added that
his remarks even if true, which they were not, were entirely
beside the point. The point was whether the Sov Govt was pre-
pared to suggest to the Chinese and HK's that fair procedures
should be worked out which would not involve our abandoning
our principle which, I repeated, had been often proclaimed
also as the principle followed by the Sov Govt. Malik merely
repeated,
repeated, "Why not let the Chi prisoners go back home"? The conversation ended on this note.

Comment: Following reactions may be of interest.

(1) There was no indication whatever that Zorin has brought with him any new lines of policy or instruction. With obvious deliberation, he refrained from making any comment although throughout conversation and particularly when Malik paused to translate, he nodded agreement with Malik's points.

(2) Malik at no time referred to the Geneva conventions.

(3) With regard to Malik's reference to the difficulty of impartial screening because of the doubt of prisoners being interrogated as to their fate in the event no armistice resulted, my impression was that this was not a studied comment but was advanced by Malik spontaneously during the course of the discussion. However, he and Zorin appeared to listen intently to my suggestion that this was precisely the kind of problem on which the Commie negotiators might suggest procedures for consideration of UNC.

(4) As may be clear from the above summary of the conversation, neither Malik nor Zorin exhibited any real anxiety on the part of the Sov. Or they to armistice. The contrary indication is all too clear judging at least from the tone and substance of Malik's comments.

GRASS

NOTE: Mr. Hickerson's office (UNA) notified 9/26/52 2:55 p.m.