

Statement by Molotov (Paris, 2 July 1947)

Caption: On 2 July 1947, during the final meeting of the Three-Power Conference in Paris, Viatcheslav Molotov, the Soviet Union Foreign Minister, criticises the Marshall Plan and US imperialism.

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Soviet Objections to the Marshall Plan

Statement by Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov at the Final Meeting of the Three Power Conference, July 2, 1947¹

The Soviet delegation has carefully examined the proposal submitted by the French delegation on July 1.

The French draft as well as the previous proposal of the British delegation sets the task of drawing up an economic program for the whole of Europe, even though the majority of European countries are known to have no nation-wide economic programs of their own. With a view to elaborating such a comprehensive European program it is proposed to set up a special organization charged with assessing the resources and needs of European countries and even with determining the development of the main branches of industry of these countries and only after that with ascertaining the possibilities of receiving American economic aid.

Therefore, the question of American economic aid of which indeed nothing definite is yet known has now provided an occasion for the British and French Governments to seek the creation of a new organization standing over and above the countries of Europe and interfering in their internal affairs down to determining the line of development to be followed by the main branches of industry in these countries. Furthermore, Great Britain and France together with the countries close to them are laying claim to a predominant position in this organization or in the so-called "Steering Committee" for Europe as it has been named in the British draft.

Verbal reservations are now being made to the effect that this organization would allegedly not intervene in the internal affairs of these states and would not encroach upon their sovereignty. But it clearly follows from the tasks which are being set before this organization or before the "Steering Committee" that the European countries would find themselves placed under control and would lose their former economic and national independence because it so pleases certain strong powers.

In any case it is now suggested that the possibility of American aid being received by this or that country involves an obedient attitude on its part vis-à-vis the above-mentioned organization and its "Steering Committee".

Where is this likely to lead?

Today pressure might be put on Poland to produce more coal even though it be at the expense of the other branches of Polish industry because that is in the interest of certain European countries; tomorrow it will be said that Czechoslovakia must be required to increase her agricultural production and to reduce her engineering industry and it will be proposed that Czechoslovakia should receive machinery from other European countries wishing to sell goods at higher prices.

Or, as the newspapers recently reported, Norway will be compelled to discontinue the development of her steel industry because that is more convenient to certain foreign steel corporations, etc.

What would then remain of the economic independence and sovereignty of such European countries?

Under these conditions how would the small countries and in general the less powerful states be able to safeguard their national economics and independence?

The Soviet Government certainly cannot venture along this path and continue to support its proposals put forth at this conference June 30. Nor does the Soviet Government share the enthusiasm regarding foreign support made apparent in the last French draft.

When efforts are directed toward Europe helping herself in the first place and developing her economic

potentialities as well as the exchange of goods between countries, such efforts are in conformity with the interests of the countries of Europe. When, however, it is stated as in the French proposal that the decisive hold on the rehabilitation of the economic life of European countries should belong to the United States and not to the European countries themselves, such a position stands in contradiction to the interests of European countries since it might lead to a denial of their economic independence, which denial is incompatible with national sovereignty.

The Soviet delegation believes that internal measures and the national efforts of each country should have a decisive importance for the countries of Europe and not make calculations for foreign support which should be of secondary importance. The Soviet Union has always counted above all on its own powers and is known to be on a steady way of progress of its economic life.

The first form of cooperation is based on the development of political and economic relations between states possessing equal rights and in that case their national sovereignty does not suffer from foreign interference.

Such is the democratic basis for international cooperation which brings nations closer together and facilitates the task of their mutual aid.

There exists, however, a different form of international cooperation based on the predominant position of one or several strong powers in relation to other countries which slip into the position of subordinated countries deprived of their independence.

It is perfectly obvious that the first form of cooperation between states when they act as parties possessing equal rights is radically different from the second form of international cooperation, when this principle is not observed.

The Soviet Government, while favoring the development of international collaboration on the basis of equal rights and mutual respect for the interests of the contracting parties, cannot lend its assistance to anyone in arranging his affairs at the expense of other countries of less strength or size because this has nothing in common with normal cooperation between states.

The Soviet Government, considering that the Anglo-French plan to set up a special organization for the coordination of the economies of European states would lead to interference in the internal affairs of European countries, particularly those which have the greatest need for outside aid, and believing that this can only complicate relations between the countries of Europe and hamper their cooperation, rejects this plan as being altogether unsatisfactory and incapable of yielding any positive results.

On the other hand the Soviet Union favors the fullest development of economic collaboration between European and other countries on a healthy basis of equality and mutual respect for national interests and has itself constantly contributed and will contribute to this end by the expansion of trade with other countries.

The fact that the Franco-British proposals raise the question of Germany and her resources merits special attention. It is proposed that the above-mentioned organization of the "Steering Committee" should also deal with the utilization of German resources although it is generally known that the justified reparation claims of those Allied countries which had suffered from German aggression still remain to be met.

Therefore not only is no special concern being shown for those countries which had made the greatest sacrifices during the war as well as important contributions to Allied victory but indeed it is at their expense that it is proposed to direct the resources of Germany for purposes other than reparations.

On the other hand nothing is being done to expedite the setting up of an all-German government which would be qualified to take care of the needs of the German people better than anyone else.

On the contrary the policy of federalizing Germany is still being carried out in the Western zones of Germany as well as the line of action directed toward a still great separation of Western German territories

from the rest of Germany, a fact which is incompatible with the genuine restoration of Germany as a united democratic state forming part of the European family of peace-loving states.

What would the implementation of the Franco-British proposal concerning the setting up of a special organization or of a “Steering Committee” for the elaboration of a comprehensive European economic program lead to?

It would lead to no good results.

It would lead to Great Britain, France and that group of countries which follows them separating themselves from the other European states and thus dividing Europe into two groups of states and creating new difficulties in the relations between them.

In that case American credits would serve not to facilitate the economic rehabilitation of Europe but to makes use of some European countries against other European countries in whatever way certain strong powers seeking to establish their domination should find it profitable to do so.

The Soviet Government considers it necessary to caution the governments of Great Britain and of France against the consequences of such action which would be directed not toward the unification of the efforts of the countries of Europe in the task of their economic rehabilitation after the war, but would lead to opposite results, which have nothing in common with the real interests of the peoples of Europe.

1. *New York Times* , July 3, 1947. p. 4. British Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin, French Foreign Minister Georges Bidault, and Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Mikhailovich Molotov met in Paris, June 27 – July 2, 1947.