

September 18, 1944

Box 21
Folder 3
Item 7
Page 1MEMORANDUM FOR MR. STETTINIUS

1. The following memorandum sets forth views held by a number of the American Delegation including (as regards the military factors) all the military and naval members. A different point of view, not to be regarded so much as positive dissent from the views herein expressed as rather, the proposal of a possibly more promising method of approach to a satisfactory outcome, is presented by those members not concurring in this statement.

2. The situation at Dumbarton Oaks has developed into what is practically an impasse on the question as to whether a permanent member of the Security Council, who is a party to a dispute, shall have the right to vote in that dispute.

3. The question of whether the conference should adjourn without further effort to resolve this impasse is one which must be decided in the highest level. In view of the world-wide interest centered on the Dumbarton Oaks conference, and the public pronouncements already made in connection with its work, no failure to agree on any vital question can fail to be regarded as a disagreement by those so disposed.

4. In

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 11652, Sec. 3.4(E) and 5(D) or (F)
By: NND 240092
Date: 7-23-94
ERC

4. In the present political situation any disagreement can be played up by partisan political elements in a manner that would be seriously detrimental to Russo-American or British-American relations.

5. If this conference is generally considered to have been a failure, the results may be serious and far reaching and may even threaten the whole project of the International Organization for international peace and security.

6. In the first place, there will remain no probability of a successful United Nations conference, since the Soviet Ambassador has stated that his Government will not take part in such a conference unless the Soviet position in this vital question is agreed to.

7. Such a development would constitute a definite break in the solidarity of the three great powers at a time when such solidarity is absolutely essential to the speedy and successful conclusion of the war, and to laying the foundation for future security.

8. Whatever the extent of the break with the Soviets, it could only adversely affect the Soviets action in entering the war against Japan. For this reason the question now under consideration has vital military implications, which in the last analysis may involve

-3-

involve lengthening the war against Japan, with all the costs in lives and money which this would involve,

9. The direct results in Europe of a break with the Soviets, may not be so definitely foreseen, but in attempting to forecast Soviets policy in Europe, without the restrictions of a world organization, it must be noted that Soviets will be the dominant military power in Europe and could not be successfully challenged in that area by any combination of powers.

10. If we are to avoid the many serious results of adjourning this conference without agreement in this crucial question, it would seem that either the United States or the Soviets must accept the others position or an acceptable compromise must be developed.

11. It is the belief of the military group at Dumbarton Oaks that after the elimination of Germany and Japan, armed power in the world will be so largely concentrated in the United States and the Soviet Union that the British Empire will find it to its advantage to cooperate in the world organization and express its agreement, with those states in the immediate future, including the question of voting arrangement as here proposed.

12. Compromise within the conference has failed but there remains the possibility of a direct appeal by the President to Marshal Stalin and Mr. Churchill.

It

-4-

It is proposed therefore that such appeal be made - first on the basis of the suggestion of the American Group dated 13 September, and secondly, in substantially the following form:

"In questions concerning the prevention or suppression of aggression decisions shall be taken by majority vote including the affirmative vote of the U.S., U.K., and U.S.S.R. and China. Any member of the Council may abstain from voting and by abstention be not obliged to join in the movement for the prevention or suppression of aggression in that instance. But in case that member does not abstain when party to a dispute with a state or states not members of the Council such state or states may sit in the proceedings and, individually or collectively, be entitled to one vote as a member of the Council."

13. Should the above suggested action looking toward a compromise fail, it is proposed that the present United States position be fully re-examined with a view to returning to the United States position as originally accepted, in numerous draft documents in the past two years. In support of this proposal the following is submitted.

14. During

14. During most of the conversations which have taken place in the Department of State beginning in 1942, the right of the veto power was considered essential for each of the Big Four. Time and again substitutes were considered but none was found which could meet the acid test that in the last analysis there had to be force behind the organization and the Big Four were the ones that could provide it.

15. In July 1944 this question was again considered and our position was modified to the extent that an effort should be made to find a solution for the situation in which one of the Big Four was a party to a dispute. No solution has been found which is acceptable to the members of the Dumbarton conference.

16. In conversations held by the Secretary of State with two groups of Senators, our position was indicated to include the right of veto on the part of the United States. It was implicit in the understanding of the group of Senators headed by Senator Connally, and by the so-called B2H2 group of Senators, that the United States would have a veto, as a member of the Big Four, particularly when it came to the use of force. The same explanation was given to the members of the House group who were in conference with the Secretary of State.

17. Copies

-6-

17. Copies of the documents stating the American position without qualification as to our right of veto were placed in the hands of the Congressional groups headed by Senator Connally and Speaker Rayburn. Among these groups are members of the opposition who may be expected to oppose the administration in its efforts to secure approval by the Senate.

18. In conclusion, it is the opinion of this group that if viewed realistically, this question of veto or no veto, which now threatens to wreck the proposed organization at the start will NOT prove to be the critical factor in the future success of the organization. In fact this question is largely academic. A great power when dealing with matters not vital to it may be expected to accede to the decisions of the council whether or not it has a right of veto. On the other hand in matters vital to a nation, that nation cannot be expected to accede to the dictates of the council, whether or not it has the veto power; and in such a case the organization will be impotent to enforce its decision against any of the three great powers.