

**Allied support for Warsaw Uprising of 1944: Roosevelt-Churchill-Stalin communications.
Selected documents.**

1. Aug. 4, 1944 message from Winston Churchill to Josef Stalin

Prime Minister to Marshal Stalin

At urgent request of Polish Underground Army we are dropping, subject to weather, about sixty tons of equipment and ammunition into the southwest quarter of Warsaw, where it is said a Polish revolt against the Germans is in fierce struggle. They also say that they appeal for Russian aid, which seems to be very near. They are being attacked by one and a half German divisions. This may be of help to your operation.

2. Aug. 15, 1944 Andrey Y. Vyshinsky, First Assistant to the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union, message to Ambassador Harrison in Moscow

The Soviet Government cannot of course object to English or American aircraft dropping arms in the region of Warsaw, since this is an American and British affair. But they decidedly object to American or British aircraft, after dropping arms in the region of Warsaw, landing on Soviet territory, since the Soviet Government do not wish to associate themselves either directly or indirectly with the adventure in Warsaw.

3. Message from Josef Stalin to Winston Churchill on Aug. 16, 1944

After the conversation with M. Mikolajczyk I gave orders that the command of the Red Army should drop arms intensively in the Warsaw sector. A parachutist liaison officer was also dropped, who, according to the report of the command, did not reach his objective as he was killed by the Germans.

Further, having familiarized myself more closely with the Warsaw affair, I am convinced that the Warsaw action represents a reckless and terrible adventure which is costing the population large sacrifices. This would not have been if the Soviet command had been informed before the beginning of the Warsaw action and if the Poles had maintained contact with it.

4. Aug. 15, 1944 Ambassador Harriman message to F.D. Roosevelt and the Acting Secretary of State

In Molotov's alleged absence, Vyshinski received us early this afternoon [15 August]. We informed him that we believed the decision of the Soviet Government was a grave mistake and that it would have serious repercussions in Washington and London. We pointed out that Vyshinski's letter did not tally with Stalin's promise to Mikolajczyk to assist the resistance movement in Warsaw.... Vyshinski adhered to

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the statements made in his letter and to the view that the outbreak in Warsaw was ill-advised, not a serious matter, not worthy of assistance, and that it would have no influence on the future course of the war. There were no reasons to reconsider the Soviet position. He said that the Soviet Government had nothing to fear as to public reaction abroad since the exploits of the Red Army and the Soviet people clearly spoke for themselves. I pointed out that we were not requesting Soviet participation in the operation and stated that I could not understand why the Soviet Government should object to our endeavour to assist the Poles even if our attempt to get arms to them should not bring about the desired results. Vyshinski maintained that the landing of the American planes at the Soviet bases constituted participation and the Soviet Government did not wish to encourage 'adventuristic actions' which might later be turned against the Soviet Union ...

Clark Kerr inquired whether he understood correctly that there had been a change in Soviet policy from Stalin's promise to Mikolajczyk to assist the Poles in Warsaw. Vyshinski maintained that there had been no change in policy, that it was primarily a matter of the best ways and means of effecting this policy, that the Red Army was helping Poland, and that the question was purely military in character. He was evasive when asked whether the Soviets intended to assist directly the Poles fighting in Warsaw.

5. Aug. 17, 1944 Ambassador Harriman message to F.D. Roosevelt and the Secretary of State

I recommend that the President send immediately a strong message to Stalin and instruct me to deliver it personally provided he is in Moscow, otherwise to Molotov (it would be helpful also to receive guidance on the oral explanation desired in order that there may be no doubt Stalin understands the President's views).

In making this recommendation I assume that I am not so out of touch with American opinion but that I reflect your views in believing that we can not (repeat not) accept the Soviet position when they allow the Poles fighting in Warsaw to be killed without lifting a hand and arbitrarily prevent us from making efforts to assist.

My own feeling is that Stalin should be made to understand that American public belief in the chances of the success of world security organization and postwar cooperation would be deeply shaken if the Soviet Government continues such a policy.

... Care should be taken however to avoid anything in the nature of a threat, and it should be borne in mind that we have so far no official knowledge that Stalin personally is committed to the decisions Vyshinski expounded as those of the Soviet Government.

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6. Aug. 18, 1944 Winston Churchill's telegram to F.D. Roosevelt

The refusal of the Soviets to allow the U.S. aircraft to bring succour to the heroic insurgents in Warsaw, added to their own complete neglect to fly supplies when only a few score of miles away, constitutes an episode of profound and far-reaching gravity. If, as is almost certain, the German triumph in Warsaw is followed by a wholesale massacre, no measure can be put upon the full consequences that will arise. I am willing to send a personal message to Stalin if you think this wise and if you will yourself send a separate similar message.

Better far than two messages would be a joint message signed by both of us. I have no doubt we could agree on the wording.

7. Aug. 24, 1944 message from F.D. Roosevelt to Winston Churchill

My information points to the practical impossibility of our providing supplies to the Warsaw Poles unless we are permitted to land on and take off from Soviet airfields, and the Soviet authorities are at the present time prohibiting their use for the relief of Warsaw.

I do not see that we can take any additional steps at the present time that promise results.

Stalin's reply ... to our joint message about the Warsaw Poles is far from encouraging to our wishes to assist.

[Signed] Roosevelt.

8. Aug. 25, 1944 Winston Churchill's telegram to F.D. Roosevelt

Uncle Joe's reply adds nothing to our knowledge, and he avoids the definite questions asked. I suggest following reply:

"We are most anxious to send American planes from England. Why should they not land on the refuelling ground which has been assigned to us behind the Russian lines without enquiry as to what they have done on the way. This should preserve the principle of your [government's] dissociation from this particular episode. We feel sure that if wounded British or American planes arrive behind the lines of your armies, they will be succoured with your usual consideration. We do not try to form an opinion about the persons who instigated this rising, which was certainly called for repeatedly by radio Moscow. Our sympathies are, however, for the 'almost unarmed people' whose special faith has led them to attack German guns, tanks, and aircraft. We cannot think that Hitler's cruelties will end with their resistance. On the contrary, it seems probable that that is the time when they will begin with full ferocity. The massacre in Warsaw will undoubtedly be a very great annoyance to us when we all meet at the end

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of the war. Unless you directly forbid it, therefore, we propose to send the planes.”

If he will not give any reply to this I feel we ought to go and see what happens. I cannot conceive that he would maltreat or detain them. Since signing this, I have seen that they are even trying to take away your airfields at Poltava and elsewhere.

9. Aug. 24, 1944 message from F.D. Roosevelt to Winston Churchill

... I do not consider it advantageous to the long range general war prospect for me to join with you in the proposed message to U.J. [Uncle Joe].

I have no objection to your sending such a message if you consider it advisable to do so.

Sources:

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2. Foreign Relations of the United States, 1944, Vol. 3, pp. 1374-6. Washington: United States Government Printing Office.
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5. Foreign Relations of the United States, 1944, Vol 3, p. 1396.
6. Churchill to Roosevelt, radio message, 18 Aug. 1944. Roosevelt Papers, Map Room Papers, Box 6.
7. Roosevelt to Churchill, radio message, 19 Aug. 1944. Ibid.
8. Churchill to Roosevelt, radio message, 25 Aug. 1944. Ibid.
9. Roosevelt to Churchill, radio message, 26 Aug. 1944. Ibid.