me in the eye when he spoke, and I felt hopeful that we could reach an agreement that would be satisfactory to the world and to ourselves.

I was surprised at Stalin’s stature—he was not over five feet five or six inches tall. When we had pictures taken, he would usually stand on the step above me. Churchill would do the same thing. They were both shorter than I. I had heard that Stalin had a withered arm, but it was not noticeable. What I most especially noticed were his eyes, his face, and his expression.

I was pleased with my first visit with Stalin. He seemed to be in a good humor. He was extremely polite, and when he was ready to leave he told me that he had enjoyed the visit. He invited me to call on him, and I promised him I would.

CHAPTER 22

Shortly before five o’clock on the afternoon of July 17 I arrived at Cecilienhof Palace in Potsdam for the opening session of the conference. Cecilienhof had been the country estate of the former Crown Prince Wilhelm. It was a two-story brownstone house of four wings with a courtyard in the center—a courtyard which was now brilliantly carpeted with a twenty-four-foot red star of geraniums, pink roses, and hydrangeas planted by the Soviets. The flags of the three Allied nations were flying over the main entrance to the palace.

Cecilienhof had been used as a hospital during the war by both the Germans and the Soviets. It had been stripped of all its furnishings, but the Russians had done an impressive job in refurnishing and refitting it for the conference. The furniture and furnishings had been brought in from Moscow. There were separate suites for the Prime Minister, the generalissimo, and myself, and each delegation had a retiring room and offices.

The place for the meetings was a big room, about forty by sixty feet, at one end of which was a balcony. Near the center of the room was a large round table twelve or fourteen feet in diameter, around which were chairs for the principal delegates from each of the three governments. I had a place on one side of the table with Byrnes, former Ambassador Joseph E. Davies, and Leahy, and my interpreter, Bohlen, sat next to me. Immediately behind me were other members of my staff. Stalin sat part way around the table to my right with Molotov, Vishinsky, and his interpreter. Behind him were members of his military and civilian staffs. Churchill was similarly placed to my left, where he sat with Eden, Clement Attlee, and several others of his staff. This arrangement permitted any
persons coming in with information to have easy access to the delegations of the governments with which they were connected.

Guards were placed unobtrusively in strategic spots in the room. The guards were made up of the Secret Service or their equivalent of each of the three governments. Around the palace and its gardens armed men policed the conference.

Present at the opening meeting were:
For Russia: Premier Stalin, Molotov, Vishinsky, Ambassador Gromyko, Ambassador Gousseve, Novikov, Sobolev, and the translator, Pavlov.
For Great Britain: Prime Minister Churchill, Anthony Eden, Clement Attlee, Sir Alexander Cadogan, Ambassador Clark Kerr, Sir William Strang, and Major Birse, the interpreter.

At ten minutes past five the Potsdam conference was officially called to order. Premier Stalin opened the meeting by suggesting that I be asked to serve as the presiding officer. Churchill seconded the motion. I thanked them both for this courtesy.

The general purpose of this first meeting was to draw up the agenda of items which would be discussed in detail at subsequent meetings. I thereupon stated that I had some concrete proposals to lay before the conference. My first proposal was to establish a Council of Foreign Ministers. I said that we should not repeat the mistakes that we made in the peace settlements of World War I.

"One of the most urgent problems in the field of foreign relations facing us today," I pointed out, "is the establishment of some procedure and machinery for the development of peace negotiations and territorial settlements without which the existing confusion, political and economic stagnation will continue to the serious detriment of Europe and the world.

"The experience at Versailles following the last war does not encourage the hope that a full formal peace conference can succeed without preliminary preparation."

I proposed that the Council be made up of the foreign ministers of Great Britain, Russia, China, France, and the United States. These countries were the permanent members of the Security Council of the United Nations. I suggested that this Council meet as soon as possible after our meeting.

Churchill suggested that the proposal be referred to Foreign Secretaries Byrnes, Eden, and Molotov for study.

Stalin agreed with that procedure but said he was not clear about the inclusion of China in a Council of Foreign Ministers to deal with the European peace.

I told Stalin that his question could be discussed by the foreign ministers and then referred back to us.

I then placed my second proposal before the conference. This dealt with the control of Germany during the initial period. I explained that the United States believed that the Control Council should begin to function at once. I submitted a statement of proposed political and economic principles under which Germany would be controlled. This document, copies of which I passed to Stalin and Churchill, outlined the basic principles that should guide the Control Council:

Complete disarmament of Germany and the elimination or control of all German industry that could be used for military production.

The German people should be made to feel that they had suffered a total military defeat and that they could not escape responsibility for what they had brought upon themselves.

The National Socialist party and all Nazi institutions should be destroyed, and all Nazi officials removed.

Preparations should be made for the eventual reconstruction of German political life on a democratic basis and for eventual peaceful cooperation in international life by Germany.

Nazi laws of the Hitler regime which established discriminations on grounds of race, creed, or political opinion should be abolished.

War criminals and those who had participated in planning or carrying on Nazi enterprises involving or resulting in atrocities or war crimes should be arrested and brought to judgment.

Economic controls should be imposed only in so far as they were necessary to the accomplishment of these ends. Germany, I stressed, should be treated as a single economic unit.

This proposal was not discussed but was referred to the foreign secretaries with instructions to report back to us the following day.

I then submitted the following statement, which I read:

"In the Yalta Declaration on liberated Europe signed February 11, 1945, the three governments assumed certain obligations in regard to the liberated peoples of Europe and the peoples of the former Axis satellite states. Since the Yalta Conference, the obligations assumed under this declaration have not been carried out. In the opinion of the United States Government the continued failure to implement these obligations would be regarded throughout the world as evidence of lack of unity between the three great powers, and would undermine confidence in the sincerity of their declared aims."
“The United States Government proposes, therefore, that the following steps to carry out the obligations of the Declaration be agreed upon at this meeting:

1. The three Allied Governments should agree on necessity of the immediate reorganization of the present governments in Rumania and Bulgaria, in conformity with Clause (C) of the third paragraph of the Yalta Declaration on liberated Europe.

2. That there be immediate consultation to work out any procedures which may be necessary for the reorganization of these governments to include representatives of all significant democratic elements. Diplomatic recognition shall be accorded and peace treaties concluded with those countries as soon as such reorganization has taken place.

3. That in conformity with the obligations contained in Clause (D) of the third paragraph of the Declaration on liberated Europe, the three governments consider how best to assist any interim governments in the holding of free and unfettered elections. Such assistance is immediately required in the case of Greece, and will in due course undoubtedly be required in Rumania and Bulgaria, and possibly other countries.”

Churchill interrupted. He pointed out that we were preparing to deal with very important policies too hastily. The British, he said, were attacked by Italy in 1940 at the time France was going down, which was described by President Roosevelt as “a stab in the back.” The British, he said, fought the Italians for some time before the United States entered the war. At a most critical time the British were obliged to send sorely needed troops to Africa, and they had fought two years on those shores until the arrival of the American forces, he added. He also pointed out that the British had suffered heavy naval losses in the war with Italy in the Mediterranean.

Churchill suggested that I proceed with the presentation of my proposal. Stalin agreed. I then submitted a document on Italy which stated in part:

“The objectives of the three governments with regard to Italy are directed towards her early political independence and economic recovery, and the right of the Italian people ultimately to choose their own form of government.”

“Under an interim arrangement, control of Italy should be retained only to cover Allied military requirements, so long as Allied forces remain in Italy and to safeguard the equitable settlement of territorial disputes.”

After submitting the four American proposals, I said that although I considered these questions of the highest importance I wanted it understood that I might add other items to the agenda. Turning to Churchill and Stalin, I expressed my appreciation for the honor of being designated chairman and said that I would welcome any proposals or suggestions they had in mind. I added that I was glad to be at this conference. I had come with some trepidation, I said, realizing that I had to succeed a man who really was irreplaceable. I was aware that President Roosevelt had been on the friendliest terms with both the Prime Minister and Premier Stalin, and I said that I was hopeful of meritng that same friendship and good will.

Churchill replied that he felt certain that both he and Stalin wished to renew with me the regard and affection which they had had for President Roosevelt, and that he had every hope and confidence that the ties between our nations and us personally would increase.

Stalin, on behalf of the whole Russian delegation, expressed the desire to join in the sentiments expressed by the Prime Minister.

Churchill then proposed that we go ahead with the simple question of the agenda and either deal with the items or refer them to the foreign ministers. The British, Churchill said, wished to add the Polish problem to the agenda.

Stalin spoke next. He set forth the questions Russia wished to discuss. These dealt with (1) the division of the German merchant fleet and Navy; (2) reparations; (3) trusteeships for Russia under the United Nations Charter; (4) relations with the Axis satellite states; (5) the Franco regime in Spain. At this point in the outline of his proposals the Russian leader digressed to declare that the Spanish regime did not originate in Spain but was imported and forced on the Spanish people by Germany and Italy. It was a danger to the United Nations, he said, and he thought it would be well to create conditions that would enable the Spanish people to establish the regime they wanted.

Churchill pointed out to Stalin that “we are only discussing things to go on the agenda,” but agreed that the matter of Spain should be added.

Stalin continued his list with (6) the question of Tangier; (7) the problem of Syria and Lebanon; and (8) the Polish question, involving the determination of Poland’s western frontier and the liquidation of the London government-in-exile.

Churchill agreed that all aspects of the Polish question should be taken
up. He stated that he was sure the Premier and I would realize that Britain had been the home of the Polish government and the base from which the Polish armies were maintained and paid. He said that, although all three of us might have the same objectives, the British would have a harder task than the other two powers because they would have the details to handle. They did not wish to release large numbers of soldiers in their midst without making proper provision for them, he added. He observed that it was important to continue to carry out the Yalta agreement and that he attached great importance to the Polish elections in order that the will of the Polish people would be reflected. He added that the British delegation were submitting their proposed agenda in writing, and suggested that the foreign secretaries meet that night and agree on the items we would discuss the following day. Stalin and I agreed.

Churchill remarked, “The foreign ministers can prepare a menu for us better than we could at this table, so tomorrow we will have prepared for us the points which are most agreeable—or, perhaps I should say, the least disagreeable.”

Stalin rejoined that all the same we would not escape the disagreeable ones.

Before adjourning the first session, I asked if there were any further suggestions. Stalin brought up the question of the Council of Foreign Ministers which I had proposed at the beginning of the meeting. He objected to the inclusion of China.

I explained that China had been suggested as a member of the proposed Council because she was one of the five members of the Security Council.

Stalin wanted to know if the quarterly meeting of the foreign secretaries, which had been in effect ever since Yalta, was not to continue.

I reminded him that the arrangement at Yalta was a temporary one.

Churchill said that he had found the quarterly meetings of the foreign secretaries very helpful in advising his government. He added that he considered it a complication to bring China into the Council and questioned the advisability of bringing in from the other part of the world a country which had contributed little to the defeat of the enemy in Europe.

I then explained that the problems to be considered by the Council would be quite different from those that would arise in the ordinary meetings of the foreign secretaries. The Council I was proposing was for certain distinct and specific purposes. These were: to draw up for submission to the United Nations treaties of peace with Italy, Rumania, Bulgaria, and Hungary, and to propose settlements of territorial questions outstanding on the termination of the war in Europe. The Council was also to be used for the preparation of a peace settlement for Germany.

Stalin commented that this would be a “conference to prepare for the future peace conference” and that this Council would deal with postwar reparations and decide on the date for the peace conference.

I replied that the date could be fixed when we felt we were adequately prepared to hold the peace conference.

Churchill said that he could foresee no difficulty in reconciling our different objectives. Until the Japanese were defeated, he said, there would be difficulties in China’s having an important role in settling the tangled problems of Europe—“the volcano from which war springs.” It was possible, he stated, that while the Council was sitting the war with Japan would end; then China could come into the world peace conference. Until that time, he said, China would have only an intellectual interest in the peace settlements.

I said that I would not object to the exclusion of China from the Council until the war with Japan was ended. At Stalin’s suggestion I referred the whole question to the foreign ministers to consider and submit recommendations to us at a later date.

Stalin quipped, “As all the questions are to be discussed by the foreign ministers, we shall have nothing to do.”

Stalin’s wry humor was frequently in evidence during the meeting. When Churchill suggested that the foreign ministers look into the question of there being four or five members on the Council, the Russian interrupted him to say, “Or three members?”

I told Stalin and Churchill that we should discuss the next day some of those points on which we could come to a conclusion. Churchill replied that the secretaries should give us three or four points—enough to keep us busy.

I said I did not want just to discuss. I wanted to decide.

Churchill asked if I wanted something in the bag each day.

He was as right as he could be. I was there to get something accomplished, and if we could not do that, I meant to go back home. I proposed that we meet at four o’clock instead of five in order to get more done during the time we would be meeting. The others agreed to this. I then proposed we adjourn.

Stalin agreed to the adjournment but said there was one question he would like to raise first: Why did Churchill refuse to give Russia her share of the German fleet?

Churchill explained that he thought the fleet should be destroyed or shared, saying that weapons of war are horrible things and that the captured vessels should be sunk.
Whereupon Stalin said, "Let us divide it," adding, "If Mr. Churchill wishes, he can sink his share."

With that, the first meeting of the Potsdam conference adjourned.

After that first meeting with Churchill and Stalin, I returned to my temporary home at Babelsberg with some confidence. I hoped that Stalin was a man who would keep his agreements. We had much to learn on this subject. Because the Russians had made immense sacrifices in men and materials—over five million men killed in action, more millions slain and starved wantonly by Hitler in his invasion of the Ukraine—we hoped that Russia would join wholeheartedly in a plan for world peace.

I did not underestimate the difficulties before us. I realized that as chairman I would be faced with many problems arising out of the conflict of interests. I knew that Stalin and Churchill each would have special interests that might clash and distract us.

Stalin, I knew, wanted the Black Sea straits for Russia, as had all the czars before him. Churchill was determined that Britain should keep and even strengthen her control of the Mediterranean. I knew that I was dealing with two men of entirely different temperaments, attitudes, and backgrounds. Churchill was great in argument. His command of the spoken word is hard to equal. Stalin was not given to long speeches. He would reduce arguments quickly to the question of power and had little patience with any other kind of approach.

I was pleased with the orderly manner in which the interpreters conducted their very essential functions. These three men had been at all the conferences before and were masters at their jobs. There was no difficulty at all in understanding what was being said. Bohlen would translate for me when I talked, Pavlov would translate while Stalin was speaking, and Major Birse would translate Churchill’s words for the Russians. We would slow down from time to time so the interpreters could translate each sentence. If there was any disagreement among the interpreters as to the proper Russian word for the English equivalent, they would settle it right there while Stalin would sit back and grin. There were times when I suspected he really understood English.

Following the adjournment of the first meeting, we were invited into a large banquet room in Cecilienhof Palace, where the Russians entertained at a lavish buffet dinner spread on a tremendous table about twenty feet wide and thirty feet long. The table was set with everything you could think of—goose liver, caviar, all sorts of meats, cheeses, chicken, turkey, duck, wines, and spirits. The major-domo in charge was from Moscow’s leading hotel. He spoke English and was very careful to show the greatest respect for all the heads of government and their foreign ministers.

On our way back to Babelsberg it was necessary for us to drive through various parts of the Russian zone. Admiral Leahy and Secretary Byrnes were with me, and at one of the crossings our car was stopped by a Russian lieutenant. The delay was no more than a matter of minutes, for we were quickly identified by other Russian officers arriving on the scene. These officers proceeded to scold the lieutenant for making such a blunder. Leahy turned to me and said, "I’ll bet that lieutenant is shot in the morning."

I worked late that evening on a big batch of mail that had arrived from Washington. At 11 P.M. my nephew, Harry Truman, arrived for a few days’ visit. He is the son of my brother Vivian, and I had mentioned to General Lee a few days earlier in Antwerp that my nephew was in the European Theater and that I would like to see him. They found him on board the Queen Elizabeth in Glasgow Harbor ready to sail for home, but General Lee got him off the ship in time and had him flown to Babelsberg. I introduced him to all the heads of government and the members of my party, and after three days Sergeant Truman was put on our communications plane, which carried mail between Washington and Potsdam, and was flown to the United States. He arrived at Norfolk ahead of the rest of his outfit and joined them as they left the Queen Elizabeth.

On the morning of the eighteenth, after a conference with my advisers, I walked to the British Prime Minister’s residence for a return visit. Later I went to Marshal Stalin’s quarters to return his call, and by four o’clock I arrived at Cecilienhof Palace for the second meeting of the conference.

Churchill opened the second meeting of the conference by raising a question of the relation of the press to the conference. At Teheran, he said, it was difficult for the press to have access to the conference, while at Yalta it had been impossible. But here, he complained, there were many representatives of the press outside the well-guarded fortress in which the conference was taking place, and they were raising a great cry in the world press regarding the inadequacy of their access to information.

"Who let them in?" Stalin shouted in a loud voice.

Churchill told the Premier that the press was being kept outside the compound. If his colleagues agreed, Churchill said he was willing to have a talk with the press, not to explain the work of the meeting, but rather why the press must be excluded.

I saw no need for this. I pointed out that each delegation had a press representative here and suggested that it be left to them to handle. We were still at war in the Pacific, and many delicate problems remained...
to be settled in Europe, and we therefore could not open the proceedings to the press.

Churchill agreed, saying, "I only offered myself as the lamb and, in any event, I would only go if the generalissimo agreed to rescue me."

I think Churchill enjoyed the reaction of his colleagues to the dramatic suggestion of his acting as spokesman in a situation such as this one.

At this second meeting I placed on the agenda three topics submitted to the conference by the foreign ministers. The first dealt with a redraft of the American proposal for setting up a Council of Foreign Ministers. It provided that the Council be made up of those countries which had already signed terms of surrender with the enemy. This left the door open for China to participate in the Council later at the close of the war with Japan. Therefore, this proposal was acceptable to us. The make-up of the Council of Foreign Ministers and the procedure for peace settlements were agreed to unanimously.

In the discussion on the submission of all treaties to the United Nations, Stalin observed that this made no difference, as "the three powers would represent the interests of all."

That was Stalin's viewpoint all the way. His viewpoint was that Russia, Britain, and the United States would settle world affairs and that it was nobody else's business. I felt very strongly that participation of all nations, small and large, was just as important to world peace as that of the Big Three. It was my policy and purpose to make the United Nations a going and vital organization.

I then asked Secretary Byrnes to read the foreign ministers' report on the American proposal on policy toward Germany. Byrnes said the political and economic experts had not yet completed their work. The foreign ministers recommended, however, that the heads of government hold an exploratory discussion on the political questions dealing with the occupation of Germany.

Churchill remarked that the word "Germany" was used repeatedly and asked what was meant by the term. If it meant prewar Germany, he was in agreement.

Stalin replied, "Germany is what she has become after the war. No other Germany exists now. Austria is not a part of Germany."

I proposed that we consider the Germany of 1937.

Stalin then suggested that we add, "Minus what Germany lost in 1945."

Germany had lost all in 1945. I said to Stalin. The generalissimo referred to the Sudetenland, which Germany had taken from Czechoslovakia, and asked if his colleagues were proposing that this be considered part of Germany. I replied that I was suggesting the Germany of 1937.

Stalin agreed that from a formal point of view Germany might be considered in this way. He suggested that the western frontier of Poland be fixed now and that the question would then become clear.

I said that this could best be done when it had been decided what to do with Germany.

Stalin, obviously stalling, said that Germany was a country with no government and with no definite frontier. It had no frontier guards, no troops. The country was broken up into four occupation zones.

I repeated that the Germany of 1937 would give us a starting point. Stalin replied that as a starting point he would accept the Germany of 1937.

Churchill said he agreed.

As chairman I ruled that the Germany of the Versailles Treaty as it existed in 1937 would be the basis of discussion.

Churchill drew attention to a clause in the document which covered the destruction of arms, implements of war, etc., in Germany. There were many things, he said, that should not be destroyed, such as wind tunnels and other technical facilities.

Stalin said that the Russians were not barbarians and that they would not destroy research institutions.

All this, of course, was before Manchuria. We were to see later what the Russians would do with the technical facilities of a conquered country. Even in Berlin they showed evidence of lack of association with civilized facilities. They robbed houses of such rare items as fine old grandfather clocks, often putting them in the bottoms of wagons and throwing heavy objects on top of them. They would smash art objects in the same way.

We now turned to a discussion of the Polish question. Stalin introduced a Russian draft proposal on Poland. The substance of this was that the conference should call upon all member governments of the United Nations to withdraw recognition from the Polish government-in-exile in London and that all assets of that government would be transferred to the provisional government in Warsaw. The Russian draft proposed placing all Polish armed forces under the control of the Warsaw government and left it up to that government to dispose of them.

What the Russians wanted to accomplish with this proposal was plain: They wished to get all the property and equipment of the 150,000 men in the Polish Army for the Warsaw regime, although this equipment had originally been supplied by Great Britain and the United States.

Churchill immediately pointed out that the burden of this proposal would fall most heavily on Britain. The United Kingdom had received the Poles when they were driven out by the Germans. He did not remind
the Russian Premier that Russian connivance had made this possible. There was no property of any kind or extent belonging to the old Polish government, he added. There were twenty million pounds of gold in London and Canada which was frozen and was the ultimate property of the Polish national state. There was a Polish embassy vacated by the old Ambassador, he said, which was available to the Ambassador of the new government as soon as they sent one, and "the sooner the better."

Churchill talked at length about the contribution the Polish forces had made to the Allied victory over the Axis, and added that Britain had pledged her honor to these men. He told us that he had said in Parliament that if there were Polish soldiers who had fought with the Allies and did not wish to return to Poland, Great Britain would receive them as British subjects.

"We cannot cast adrift men who have been brothers in arms," he declared.

He hoped that most of them would want to go back to their own country, but he felt that there should be reassurances that they would be safe there in the pursuit of their livelihoods. Subject to these reservations, he said, he was in agreement with the Russian proposal and would be pleased to have it passed on to the foreign secretaries for study.

Stalin said that he appreciated the difficulties of the British and that there was no intention on the part of Russia to make the British position more complicated. He merely wished to put an end to the former Polish government in London. Stalin offered to withdraw any part of the Russian draft which Churchill felt would complicate the British position.

I said I wanted an agreement on the Polish question, but what I was particularly interested in was free elections for Poland, as assured by the Yalta agreement.

Stalin replied that the Polish government had never refused to hold elections. He suggested that the question be referred to the foreign secretaries, and Churchill and I agreed.

That was all of the agenda for the second meeting, and the session adjourned at six o'clock, after meeting only an hour and forty-five minutes. I felt that some progress had been made, but I was beginning to grow impatient for more action and fewer words.

Late that night I talked with Mrs. Truman in Independence via transatlantic radiotelephone. It was the first call from Berlin to America since 1942. The connection was just as clear as if it had been between Independence and Washington. I learned later that the calls were routed over Signal Corps circuits through Frankfurt and London to New York and from there to Independence.

CHAPTER 23

At the third session, on July 19, I asked Anthony Eden to present the agenda prepared by the foreign ministers for our discussion. He submitted a revised draft of the political agreement on Germany, and it was accepted by Churchill, Stalin, and myself. The other subjects on the agenda included the disposition of the German naval and merchant fleet; Franco Spain; the situation in Yugoslavia; and the removal of oil equipment from Rumania.

On the question of the disposition of the German fleet, I said that we had to make a distinction between what was reparations and what was war booty. The merchant fleet, I said, should be classified as reparations, and the matter therefore would eventually be referred to the Reparations Commission. Our interest in the merchant fleet, I declared, was to make use of it in the Japanese war zone.

Stalin said that war material taken by armies in the course of a war is booty. Armies that laid down their arms and surrendered, he said, turned in their arms as booty. He applied the same thing to the German Navy; when the fleet was surrendered to the three powers, it therefore became booty. It was possible, however, Stalin continued, to discuss the question whether the merchant fleet was booty or reparations. Regarding the Navy, he said, there was no question about the matter. He recalled the case of Italy, in which both naval and merchant fleets had been treated as booty, and no question had been raised.

Churchill said he hoped we could solve the problem by agreement at the conference. He was speaking only of the German war fleet. He said that the British had the whole of the German merchant fleet in their keeping at the present time.
Churchill pointed out that the U-boats had a limited legal use and that the Germans had used them in contravention of the international agreements on this subject. As many of them as possible, in his opinion, should be destroyed and the remainder shared equally. With respect to the other naval vessels, he thought they should be divided equally, provided a general agreement was achieved at the conference. He said he did not feel that a nation as great and as mighty as Russia should be denied a share. As it took so long to build new vessels, he said, these vessels would be a means of developing a Russian navy and training personnel and would facilitate showing the Russian flag on the ocean.

Churchill continued his summary of the problems by saying that he felt that all ships should be used to contribute to the ending of the war with Japan.

I said that I would be agreeable to a three-way division of the German merchant and naval fleets, but that I should like it to be done after the war in the Pacific was over. I emphasized that we needed these ships not only for the conduct of the war but also to haul food and supplies for the rehabilitation of Europe, and even to our Russian ally, to Greece, and to other countries. We would need every bomb and every ton of food that could be moved by ship.

Stalin asked me what I thought about the German Navy.

I told him that I was ready to dispose of Germany's naval vessels right then. "When the war with Japan is over," I said, "the United States will have both merchant and naval ships for sale." But I did not want the situation disturbed until Japan had been defeated.

Stalin inquired, "Are not the Russians to wage war against Japan?"

I replied that when Russia was ready to fight Japan she would be taken into the shipping pool the same as the others. I added that we were eager to have Russia in the shipping pool with us.

Churchill suggested that the vessels could be earmarked, "if they had any ears when the Japanese war was over"; if any were damaged, they could be made good from our general resources. He said that he must avow himself as a supporter of the request of Marshal Stalin that the Russians receive a share of these war and merchant vessels. The only alternative, he said, was the sinking of the naval vessels, which, he felt, would be a harsh procedure when "one of our trusty allies has a desire for them."

I observed that we were not apart on this question.

Stalin said that of course it was not possible to depict the Russians as having the intention to interfere with the war against Japan, and the matter could not be put in a way to imply that they were to receive a gift from the Allies. They were not after a gift, he asserted.

Churchill and I reminded him that neither of us had mentioned such a thing.

Stalin continued by asking that the matter be cleared up as to whether Russia was to have the right to claim one third of the German merchant and naval fleet. If one third was allocated to Russia, he promised, he would raise no objection to its use in the war against Japan.

It was agreed, as proposed by Churchill, that the matter would be settled at the end of the conference.

Stalin said there was one other thing he should like to see accomplished. His representatives were not allowed to see the German fleet. The Russians had set up a commission to deal with this question, he said, but they were not allowed to see the fleet, nor were they even given a list of the vessels. He requested a list and permission to inspect the ships.

Churchill replied that it was quite possible, but the British would want reciprocal facilities to be given them to see German installations in the Baltic. He believed that the Russians had obtained forty-five German U-boats in Danzig. He suggested an interchange of inspections.

Stalin observed that these submarines were damaged and out of use but that he could arrange for Churchill's people to see them.

"All we want is reciprocity," Churchill replied.

I said that so far as the United States zone in Germany was concerned the Russians were at liberty to see anything they wanted to see but that we, too, would expect reciprocity. I was trying to pave the way for the Reparations Commission to see everything that had been captured by the Russians in the territory they had taken over. I had already had a glimpse of what was happening to materials that had been captured from Germany by the Russians. In the Russian zone of Berlin, which was the industrial zone of the city, I had seen where the Russians had torn the plants up and taken everything out of them. They had loaded the industrial facilities on flatcars, and in many instances the cars were standing on a sidetrack. The material was rusting and disintegrating. Very soon it would be of no use to anybody.

I suggested that we move on to the question of Spain. Churchill said that his government had a strong distaste for General Franco and his government. But, he said, there was more to Spanish policy than drawing rude cartoons of Franco. He revealed that Franco had written him a letter proposing that they join each other to organize the Western states against "that terrible country Russia." With the approval of the British Cabinet, Churchill said he had sent Franco a chilly reply and that a copy of this reply had been sent to Molotov.

Stalin said he had received a copy of the British reply to Franco.

Churchill went on to say that he saw some difficulty in Stalin's pro-
He said that the Yugoslavs were in extreme disagreement. Agreement had not been carried out and things had turned out as Stalin-Subasic of the Franco regime. Stalin suggested that the foreign secretaries try to find some means of settling such questions and that we could not pass by this cancer in Europe. If we remained silent, he warned, it might be considered that we sanctioned Franco.

Churchill reiterated his opposition to breaking relations. He referred to the valuable trade relations which Britain maintained with Spain. Unless he were convinced, he said, that breaking relations would bring about the desired result, he did not want this old and well-established trade with Spain stopped. He fully understood the feeling of Marshal Stalin, he said, when Franco had had the audacity to send a Spanish Blue Division to Russia. Russia was in a different position, he admitted, because she had been molested. He pointed out that the Spaniards had refrained from taking action against the British at a time when such intervention could have been disastrous. During the Torch operation, he said, merely opening fire on the ships in the area of Gibraltar would have done the British great harm. But the Spaniards would have been doomed if they had dared to take such action against the Allies.

Stalin suggested that the foreign secretaries try to find some means of making it clear that the heads of the three governments were not in favor of the Franco regime.

I made it clear that I had no love for Franco and also that I had no desire to have any part in starting another civil war in Spain. There had been enough wars in Europe. I said that I would be happy to recognize another government in Spain but that I thought Spain itself must settle that question.

Stalin said that this was no internal affair, because the Franco regime had been imposed on the Spanish people by Hitler and Mussolini. He said he believed that his colleagues had no love for Franco and that he did not propose to renew civil war in Spain either. If breaking relations was too severe a demonstration, he asked if there were not some other more flexible means by which the Big Three could let the Spanish people know that the three governments were in sympathy with the people of Spain and not Franco. He said it was presumed that the Big Three could settle such questions and that we could not pass by this cancer in Europe. If we remained silent, he warned, it might be considered that we sanctioned Franco.

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Franco, and others. I told them frankly that I did not wish to waste time
listening to grievances but wanted to deal with the problems which the
three heads of government had come to settle. I said that if they did
not get to the main issues I was going to pack up and go home. I meant
just that.

Stalin laughed heartily and said he did not blame the President for
wanting to go home; he wanted to go home too.

Churchill said he thought that the United States was interested in
carrying out the Yalta agreement. Great allowances had to be made for
Tito, he said, in view of the great disturbances in that country.

I replied that I not only desired to see the Yalta Declaration carried
out but that, in so far as the United States was concerned, I intended
to carry it out to the letter. I observed that we, too, had received com-
plaints about Yugoslavia. I suggested that the matter of Yugoslavia be
postponed so that we could go ahead with other and more urgent prob-
lems before us.

Our final topic on the agenda for the day had to do with British and
American oil equipment in Rumania.

Churchill said that the British had submitted a paper on this subject
which they thought the foreign ministers could agree upon, and suggested
that since it was a rather detailed question it be referred to them first.

Stalin said he thought this was a trifling matter which could be settled
through diplomatic channels without raising it at this conference. Since
it had been brought up, however, he wished to rectify one misstatement,
he said. No British property had been taken by the Soviet Union in
Rumania, he declared. The property of some of these oil companies had
been obtained in Germany, but the Germans had captured it and had
used it against the Allies. The Russians, Stalin admitted, removed some
quantity of this type of equipment because the Germans had destroyed
the Soviet oil industry. He repeated that this was a trifling matter with
which the conference should not be troubled.

The reason Stalin insisted that this was a “trifling matter” was that
he had obtained possession of equipment that belonged to the United
States and Great Britain. It was funny to watch him. Every time there
was something like this, where the Russians had stolen the coffin and
disposed of the body, he was always very careful to insist that it be settled
through diplomatic channels. But where it was a matter of Franco Spain
and Yugoslavia, he was very anxious that the matter be put out on the
table and settled. I saw what was going on, and that is why I made my
“police court” statement when I did.

Churchill stated that the disposition of British and American oil equip-
ment was not a trifling matter. It was true, he agreed, that the Germans
had stolen pipe from the British, but it was pipe which the British had
bought and paid for. If the Soviet Union took some of this pipe, the
Prime Minister asserted, and was considering it as reparations, then
Rumania should reimburse the British for it.

I observed that the United States was involved in a similar situation
with regard to American oil companies.

Stalin had nothing more to say on this subject.

It was agreed that the matter would be referred to the foreign ministers,
and this concluded the third meeting.

On the evening following the third afternoon session I entertained at
a state dinner held in the Little White House. Guests at the dinner, in
addition to Churchill and Stalin, were Byrnes, Attlee, Molotov, Leahy,
Vishinsky, Cadogan, Harriman, Gromyko, Lord Cherwell, Pauley,
Davies, Sobolev, Bohlen, Pavlov, and Birse.

Music was by a special concert orchestra. The pianist, Sergeant Eugene
List, played Chopin’s great Waltz in A-Flat Major, Opus 42, and several
Chopin nocturnes. Stalin was a Chopin fan. Churchill did not care much
for that kind of music. Stalin was so delighted by the Chopin waltz and
nocturnes that he rose from the dinner table, walked over to Sergeant
List, shook his hand, drank a toast to him, and asked him to play more.
The Prime Minister also complimented List. I took a hand in the musical
program, and when I was asked to play the piano, I offered Paderewski’s
Minuet in G, one of my favorites. Since I had been told previously that
Stalin was fond of Chopin, I had asked Sergeant List to brush up on his
Chopin. He sent for the score of the Waltz in A-Flat Major and prac-
ticed it for a week before the dinner. The piano was not a good concert
instrument, but List did a good job anyway.

This was the first of several informal gatherings among the heads of
the three governments. These social occasions helped to promote a
friendly atmosphere among the men who had come to Berlin to settle
problems which demanded the utmost in co-operation if they were to be
solved.

The following day, July 20, I drove to the United States Group Control
Council headquarters in Berlin to participate in the official raising of the
Stars and Stripes over Berlin. The ceremonies were held in the courtyard
of the buildings which had formerly been the home of the German Air
Defense Command for Berlin. Honors were accorded by an Army band
and an honor guard from Company E of the 41st Infantry. In the party
with me were Secretary Stimson, Assistant Secretary McCloy, and Gen-
erals Eisenhower, Bradley, Patton, and Clay.

As the flag was officially raised over the U.S.-controlled section of
Berlin—the same flag, incidentally, which had flown over the United
States Capitol in Washington when war was declared against Germany and which had been taken to Rome after that city's capture—I made the following remarks:

"General Eisenhower, officers, and men: This is an historic occasion. We have conclusively proved that a free people can successfully look after the affairs of the world. We are here today to raise the flag of victory over the capital of our greatest adversary. In doing this, we must remember that in raising this flag we are raising it in the name of the people of the United States who are looking forward to a better world, a peaceful world, a world in which all the people will have an opportunity to enjoy the good things in life and not just a few at the top. Let's not forget that we are fighting for peace and for the welfare of mankind. We are not fighting for conquest. There is not one piece of territory or one thing of a monetary nature that we want out of this war. We want peace and prosperity for the world as a whole. We want to see the time come when we can do the things in peace that we have been able to do in war. If we can put this tremendous machine of ours, which has made this victory possible, to work for peace, we could look forward to the greatest age in the history of mankind. That is what we propose to do."

I left the scene of the flag-raising immediately after the ceremony and proceeded to Cecilienhof Palace, where I called the fourth meeting of the Potsdam conference to order at 4:05 P.M.

In keeping with the practice which had been established by the foreign ministers of taking turns in reporting their meetings to the Big Three, Molotov presented the agenda for the fourth session. He reported that the foreign ministers had a long discussion on the subject of Bulgaria, Rumania, and Greece in connection with the working out of the Yalta decision concerning supervision of elections, but that they had not arrived at an agreement.

I interrupted the Soviet secretary to say that I had no desire to "supervise" elections in the liberated countries and that I thought "observe" would be a better word.

Churchill intervened also to state that the British had not contemplated control of the elections and did not wish to have responsibility for them. They merely wanted to know how the elections were being conducted in these countries.

Turning next to the question of policy toward Italy, I stated that I stood behind the draft which I had submitted at the opening session. This called for a series of simple obligations to replace the surrender terms so that Italy might be freed of occupation restrictions while the peace treaty was still in preparation.

Stalin said that he had no objections in principle to the United States proposals, but he wanted the same treatment to be extended to the other German satellites—Finland, Hungary, Rumania, and Bulgaria.

I said that I had brought up Italy first because she surrendered first, and the surrender terms imposed on Italy had been more harsh than those imposed on the other satellite states. I suggested that we take care of Italy first, then take up the others.

Churchill was reluctant to abandon the terms of the Italian surrender and made a long speech on the subject. He said the Italian government intended to hold elections before winter. While he agreed that a start should be made on the work of preparing a peace treaty, he did not think a final conclusion should be reached until the Italian government rested on a recognized democratic base. He said he was not in full agreement with my position to replace surrender terms with undertakings which the Italian people were not prepared to assume. The proposed undertakings, he felt, did not cover the future of the Italian fleet, reparations, colonies, and other details. He feared that the British would lose their rights under the surrender. Finally, he stated that the terms of surrender were signed by the Dominions, and they would have to be consulted. He did not wish to go further than to assent to the preparation of a peace treaty.

Churchill always found it necessary in cases of this kind, particularly where the Mediterranean was involved, to make long statements like this and then agree to what had already been done. The Mediterranean at that time was extremely vital to the British because it was the highway to India and Australia. He was apparently making a record for use later by the British when the peace treaties were really and actually negotiated. He did the same thing when we were talking about Franco and Spain. On several occasions when Churchill was discussing something at length, Stalin would lean on his elbow, pull on his mustache, and say, "Why don't you agree? The Americans agree, and we agree. You will agree eventually, so why don't you do it now?" Then the argument would stop. Churchill in the end would agree, but he had to make a speech about it first.

Stalin stated that the question of Italy and that of the satellite countries were questions of great policy. The purpose of such a policy was to separate these countries from Germany. There were two methods by which this could be done, he said. One was the use of force, but this would not be enough, he felt. If we used force alone, he warned, we would create a medium that would favor the association of these countries with Germany. Therefore, he concluded, it was expedient to add force to a policy that would weaken the satellite nations from Germany. That would be the only means, he explained, of rallying the satellites
around us. All considerations of revenge, all complaints of suffering were relatively unimportant, he said, compared with these considerations of high policy. He said he had no objection in principle to the proposal by me, but he asserted that there might be some improvements of a drafting nature.

Stalin observed that Italy had committed great sins. It had committed some sins against the Russians. The Italians had fought on the Don and in the Ukraine, he pointed out, but it would be incorrect to be guided by injuries or feelings of retribution. Such feelings, he said, were poor advisers in politics. In politics, he continued, we should be guided by the calculation of forces. The question then was whether we wanted Italy on the side of the United Nations. This determined everything, in his opinion, and the same principle applied to the other satellites.

While Stalin was capable of making speeches about the German satellites—Bulgaria, Italy, Hungary—he always had his iron heel on those satellites which his Army had occupied so they could not turn around. His iron-heel policy had been extended to Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Bulgaria, Hungary, Rumania, and Czechoslovakia.

Stalin pointed out that there had been many difficulties and sacrifices caused them by the satellite states. Rumania had used twenty-two divisions against them. At the termination of the war Hungary had twenty-six divisions, and still greater injuries were caused them by Finland. Of course, he said, if it had not been for the help of Finland, Germany could not have maintained the blockade at Leningrad. Finland had moved twenty-four divisions against Soviet troops. Bulgaria, he thought, should be punished for causing alarm to the Allies, Yugoslavia, and Greece. The armistice terms provided for reparations to be paid to these two countries, and he told us “not to worry, for the Russians would compel this payment.”

What he meant was that the Russians would steal it if they could not get it any other way.

Stalin continued to speak for a considerable time. It was about the longest speech he was to make in the whole conference. He never used notes, although he might turn to Molotov or Vishinsky once in a while. He would talk for about five minutes, then Pavlov would translate. Stalin knew exactly what he wanted to say and what he wanted to obtain. He spoke in a quiet, inoffensive way.

I stated that, as I understood the position, I had made a concrete proposal. The armistice agreement with Italy had been signed by the three governments represented here. The same was true of the other armistice arrangements. I had made a proposition, I repeated, with regard to Italy. and Marshal Stalin had made a proposal with regard to the others.

Stalin interrupted to point out that the dominions had not signed these agreements.

Eden replied that the three countries had signed in the names of all the other United Nations.

I interrupted at this point to state that I would like to keep the argument to the questions which we had been discussing. On the agenda of our meeting, I said, there had been the suggestion of a statement of policy on Italy; Marshal Stalin had raised the question of Rumania, Bulgaria, and Finland.

I thought that agreement could be reached on all of these satellite countries. The United States policy in this matter, I explained, was for bringing about a feeling of peace in the world, and this did not have to wait a final peace conference for the world as a whole.

My country, I said, was faced with a situation where it must spend enormous sums of money because of conditions in the countries of Europe. With reference to the question of reparations from Italy, I reminded the Premier and the Prime Minister that the United States was spending from seven hundred and fifty million dollars to a billion dollars to feed Italy this winter. The United States was rich, I conceded, but it could not forever pour out its resources for the help of others without getting some results toward peace for its efforts.

Unless we were able to help get these governments on a self-supporting basis, I warned, the United States would not be able to continue to maintain them indefinitely when they should be able to help themselves. The Big Three, I said, must try at this meeting to prepare conditions that would bring about a situation in which these countries could help themselves.

Our discussion of Italian policy followed the course of most subjects we had touched on so far: it was referred to the foreign secretaries for study and was then to be reported back to us.

The next point on the agenda was the situation in Austria, particularly in Vienna.

Churchill complained that the British had not even been allowed to enter the sector assigned to them in Vienna because of intervention by Russian troops.

Stalin replied that only yesterday agreement had been reached on zones inside Vienna. As far as he was concerned the movement of troops into Vienna could begin at once.

Churchill said he was glad the matter was settled at last.

After the session adjourned, I returned immediately to Babelsberg, where I was pleased to find Colonel L. Curtis Tiernan, Chief of Army Chaplains in the European Theater, at the Little White House. Mon-
signor Tiernan had been chaplain of the 129th Field Artillery of the 35th Division, in which I had served during World War I. During the night rides of my field artillery outfit (I was C.O. of Battery D) Monsignor Tiernan—or the Padre, as we all affectionately called him—would ride with me at the head of the outfit, and we would discuss all the ills of the world, both political and religious. He is one of the best-informed men I have ever known and one of the kindliest. He is a good man, and that says everything necessary about him. The monsignor was stationed in Paris during World War II. When I first landed at Antwerp, I had asked that he be brought to Potsdam for a visit. He spent several days with me at the Little White House.

Our fifth session, on July 21, opened with a statement on the Polish question. Secretary Byrnes reported that the foreign ministers had been unable to reach agreement and wished to refer the matter to the heads of government for final decision. Churchill and I, without much debate, were able to get Stalin to accept two paragraphs in the proposed declaration on Poland which Molotov had previously blocked in the foreign secretaries' meeting. One of these recognized the principle that the liabilities of the former Polish government should be taken into account in determining Polish assets abroad, mainly in England and the United States, which would be turned over to the Warsaw regime. The second of Stalin's concessions involved a specific statement that press observers would be admitted to the Polish elections.

The next important question on the agenda was that of the Polish western frontier. I began by saying that I wanted to make a general statement regarding the Polish frontiers. I said it had been decided at Yalta that Germany would be occupied by the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, the United States, and France, and that the Polish frontiers would be favorably considered by the four governments but that final settlement of the frontiers would be effected at the peace conference. I pointed out that the three governments had decided upon zones of occupation in Germany. The boundaries of these zones had been set, and the Americans and the British had already gone into the areas assigned to them. It now appeared, I said, as if another occupying government was being assigned a zone in Germany. This was being done without consultation, I charged, and if the Poles were actually to occupy this zone, an agreement on it should have been reached. I added that I failed to see how reparations or other questions could be decided if Germany were carved up. I made it clear that I was very friendly toward the Polish provisional government, and I felt that full agreement could probably be reached on what the Soviet government desired, but I wanted to be consulted.

Stalin replied that the Yalta decision was that the eastern frontiers of Poland should follow the Curzon Line. In regard to the western frontiers, it had been decided at Yalta that Poland should receive cessions of territory in the north and west. He said it had also been decided that a new Polish government should consult at the appropriate time on the final settlement of the western frontiers.

I agreed that this was a correct statement of the Yalta decision but that it was not correct to assign a zone of occupation to the Poles.

Stalin declared that it was not accurate to say that the Russians had given the Poles a zone of occupation without agreement. What had happened, he explained, was that the German population in these areas had followed the German Army to the west, and the Poles had remained. The Red Army, he said, had needed local administration in this territory. It could not clear out enemy agents and fight a war and set up an administration at the same time, and he was unable to see what harm had been done by the establishment of a Polish administration where only Poles remained.

I replied that I had no objection to an expression of opinion regarding the western frontier, but I wanted it distinctly understood that the zones of occupation would be exactly as established by previous agreement at Yalta. Any other course, I warned, would make reparations very difficult, particularly if part of the German territory was gone before agreement was reached on what reparations should be.

Stalin boasted that the Soviet Union was not afraid of the reparations question and would, if necessary, renounce reparations entirely.

In response to this, I observed that however this matter was handled the United States would get no reparations—that what we were trying to do was to keep from paying the reparations bill from the U. S. Treasury, as we had done after World War I.

Stalin then said that no frontiers had been ceded at Yalta except for the provision that Poland would receive territory. The western frontier question was open, and the Soviet Union was not bound.

I turned to Stalin. "You are not?" I asked.

"No," replied Stalin.

Churchill remarked that he had a good deal to say about the actual line but gathered that it was not yet the time for saying it.

I agreed that it was not possible for the heads of government to settle this question. It was a matter for the peace conference.

Stalin expressed the opinion that it would be very difficult to restore a German administration in this area of East Prussia. He said that he
wanted me to understand the Russian conception, to which the Russians had adhered both in war and during the occupation. According to this view, an army fights in war and cares only for its efforts to win the war. To enable an army to win and advance, it must have a quiet rear. It fights well if the rear is quiet, and better if the rear is friendly.

Even if the Germans had not fled, he went on, it would have been very difficult to set up a German administration in this area because the majority of the population was Polish. The Poles who were there, he contended, had received the Soviet Army enthusiastically, and it was only natural that the Soviet government should have set up an administration of friends, especially since the Russian Army was still fighting to win the war. He insisted there was no other way out. Soviet action, he said, did not imply that the Russians had settled the question themselves. Perhaps, he suggested, the whole question should be suspended.

Churchill raised a doubt as to whether the question could be suspended and added that there was also the question of supply. This was very urgent because the region under discussion was a very important source of food from which Germany was to be fed.

Stalin asked who would work to produce the grain and who would plow the fields.

I pointed out that the question was not one of who occupied an area but a question of the occupation of Germany. We should occupy our zone, the British theirs, the French theirs, and the Russians should occupy theirs. There was no objection, I said, to discussing the western frontiers of Poland, and I added that I did not believe we were far apart on this matter.

Stalin insisted that on paper these areas constituted German territory, but for all practical purposes they were actually Polish territories since there was no German population.

I took issue with that by remarking that nine million Germans seemed like a big population to me.

Stalin maintained, however, that all the Germans had fled westward.

Churchill observed that if this were true, consideration should be given to the means of feeding them in the regions to which they had fled. The produce of the land they had left, he added, was not yet available to nourish Germany.

He went on to say that it was his understanding that under the full Polish plan put forward by the Soviet government one quarter of the total arable land of 1937 Germany would be alienated from the German area on which food and reparations were based. This was tremendous. It appeared, he continued, that three to four million people would be moved, but the prewar population of that territory had been eight and a quarter million. It was a serious matter, he concluded, to effect wholesale transfers of German populations and burden the remainder of Germany with their care if their food supply had been alienated.

I interjected to ask where we would be if we should give France the Saar and the Ruhr.

Stalin replied that the Soviet government had not made a decision in regard to French claims, but it had done so in regard to the western frontier of Poland. He added that he fully appreciated the difficulties that would arise in transferring this territory from the Germans to the Poles, but that the German people were principally to blame for these difficulties. Churchill, he said, had quoted the figure of eight and a quarter million as the population of this area. It should be remembered, Stalin said, that there had been several “call-ups” during the war and that the rest of the population had left before the Soviet Army arrived. He emphasized that no single German remained in the territory to be given Poland.

“Of course not,” Admiral Leahy whispered to me. “The Bolshies have killed all of them!”

Stalin went on to say that between the Oder and the Vistula the Germans had quitted their fields, which were now being cultivated by the Poles. It was unlikely, he said, that the Poles would agree to the return of these Germans.

Of course I knew that Stalin was misrepresenting the facts. The Soviets had taken the Polish territory east of the Curzon Line, and they were now trying to compensate Poland at the expense of the other three occupying powers. I would not stand for it, nor would Churchill. I was of the opinion that the Russians had killed the German population or had chased them into our zones.

I was getting tired of sitting and listening to endless debate on matters that could not be settled at this conference yet took up precious time. I was anxious also to avoid any sharpening of the verbal clashes in view of the more immediate and urgent questions that needed to be settled. I was becoming very impatient, and on a number of occasions I felt like blowing the roof off the palace.

When Stalin concluded, I said that I wanted to declare again that the occupation zones in Germany should be occupied as agreed upon. The question of whether the Poles should have part of Germany, I said, could not be settled here.

The argument continued between Stalin and Churchill.

At last I intervened to say that it seemed to be an accomplished fact that a large piece of Germany had been given to the Poles. The Silesian coal mines, I pointed out, were a part of Germany for reparations and
feeding purposes, and these were now in Polish hands. We could talk about boundaries and reparations and feeding problems, but the Poles, I emphasized, had no right to take this territory and remove it from the German economy. Simply stated, I said, the case was this: Were the zones valid until peace terms had been signed, or were we going to give Germany away piecemeal?

Stalin recapitulated his claims for Polish control of the arable lands and the coal mines of Silesia, saying that his policy was to make things difficult for the Germans so that German power would not rise again. It was better to make difficulties for the Germans, he reasoned, than for the Poles.

I replied that it was bad to create difficulties for the Allies.

Stalin asserted that the less industry there was in Germany the greater would be the market for American and British goods. Germany was a dangerous business rival, he said, unless we kept her on her knees. Churchill remarked that we 'did not wish to be confronted by a mass of starving people. Stalin assured him, "There will be none."

Clement Attlee then spoke at some length, taking the same view that Churchill and I had taken.

It seemed to me that nothing remained to be said except to repeat in all frankness where I stood: I could not agree to the separation of the eastern part of Germany.

Stalin, too, apparently had decided there was nothing to be gained by continuing this discussion.

"Are we through?" he asked abruptly.

Churchill suggested that we were hardly through but that we should turn now to more agreeable things.

I announced that the conference had apparently reached an impasse on this matter and that the session was adjourned.

That evening Stalin gave a state dinner. It was quite an occasion, and I described parts of it in a letter to Mama and Mary two days later:

Berlin, July 23, 1945

Dear Mama & Mary:—Your letter of the 16th came yesterday and those of the 17th and 19th came this morning. I am most happy to hear from you. I suppose the radio keeps you well informed on my movements.

The conference has met every day since the 17th. Many things have been accomplished and many more which should be accomplished have not been acted upon. But we have time yet to get most of them in some sort of shape for a peace conference.

Stalin gave his state dinner night before last, and it was a wow. Started with caviar and vodka and wound up with watermelon and champagne, with smoked fish, fresh fish, venison, chicken, duck and all sorts of vegetables in between. There was a toast every five minutes until at least twenty-five had been drunk. I ate very little and drank less, but it was a colorful and enjoyable occasion.

When I had Stalin & Churchill here for dinner, I think I told you that a young sergeant named List from Philadelphia played the piano, and a boy from the Metropolitan Orchestra played the violin. They are the best we have, and they are very good. Stalin sent to Moscow and brought on his two best pianists and two female violinists. They were excellent, Played Chopin, Liszt, Tschaikowsky and all the rest. I congratulated him and them on their ability. ... It was a nice dinner, ...