

Potsdam peace conference; journal entries

July 10, 1945

WJB goes to airport at 10 AM. Briefing from ATC officer on what to do in case the plane goes down in the Atlantic.

4:35, arrive in Newfoundland.

6:30 PM, leave Newfoundland.

3:10 AM, arrive in Azores.

4:50 AM, leave Santa Maria, the Azores.

12:45 PM, arrive in Paris; American soldiers say that the French do not appreciate what we did in liberating them.

July 13, 1945

10:20 AM, leave Paris.

1:30 PM, arrive at Gatow Airport near Potsdam. WJB views destruction of Berlin.

July 14, 1945

WJB tours Frankfort, observes that the American zone is in good shape. Also, the difference between Berlin and Frankfort is like night and day.

July 15, 1945

William L.

Clayton in favor of more liberal lend-lease. Charles Sawyer met Truman in Antwerp and told him, "these people not suffering and time for Uncle Sam to quit playing Santa Claus to the world."

JFB issues directive: no lend-lease except for the prosecution of the war against Japan.

WJB: Truman looking to JFB for consultation in many matters.

July 16, 1945

Ben Cohen proposes the creation of a Ruhr state under international protectorate.

WJB: Joe Davies running around with no conception of what is going on.

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*** President and Byrnes want to tell Stalin about new explosive but Churchill says delay telling him.

WJB observes: Wholesale raping and looting by Russian soldiers for 10 days after Berlin fell. Of 15-50 age group, no one missed. Most able-bodied men taken to mines in Russia. $\frac{1}{2}$ million gallons of milk spoiled for lack of a clogging apparatus.

July 17, 1945

Stalin, Truman, Molotov and JFB have lunch. Stalin almost runs into JFB's bedroom before he can be stopped and directed upstairs.

FIRST BIG THREE MEETING. Discussion centers on AGENDA. Churchill questions putting China on the foreign ministers council since the problems deal with Europe. Matter referred to the foreign ministers.

Truman abruptly throws in Italy since it has declared war on Japan. WJB: He did not read memo which had been prepared leading up to the proposal but just abruptly made it almost ad libbing.

Churchill is taken aback. Proposes referring to foreign ministers.

Stalin: "We are going to have nothing to do." (smiling. This produces laughter.)

Implementation of Yalta provision on liberated areas also referred to foreign ministers
Churchill suggests Poland.

Stalin suggests trusteeships, German navy, satellite nations.

Stalin wants to bust up Franco regime and establish one friendly to the United Nations.

JFB decides not to bring up Cohen plan for Ruhr. (WJB had submitted memo opposing.)

Stalin brings up question of dividing German ships. Churchill: "We'll divide them or sink them."

Truman says he wants decisions and not discussions.

Later JFB calls a "family discussion." Tells of conversation with Stalin and Molotov regarding Soong's talks with Russia. Russia wants control of Dairen and the Manchurian Railroad. They want Dairen as a free port but oppose joint control.

JFB encouraged at prospects for early end to war. Message given him by Churchill, who received it from the British Ambassador in Moscow telling of the overtures being

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made by Japan for an armistice.

WJB riding through Postdam: Russian and American soldiers smiling at each other and slapping each other on the back. Everyone understands a smile.

July 18, 1945

JFB, Truman and Stalin talk.

Stalin: Japan had asked to send peace mission to Moscow. Said the Emperor did not want to continue the war, but no way out under unconditional surrender terms.

JFB then asked if Russia had changed its policy regarding unconditional surrender.

Stalin: "No change."

Stalin said that Japan realized that Russia was coming into the war because they could see Russian troops on border. But Russia would not be ready to move against Japan before August 15.

WJB: JFB had hoped Russian declaration of war against Japan would come out of this conference. Now he thinks US and UK will have to issue joint statement giving Japan two weeks to surrender or face destruction. (Secret weapon will be ready by that time.)

WJB then adds in journal: Although I knew about the atomic bomb when I wrote these notes, I dared not place it in writing in my book.

WJB urges JFB that there be no secret agreements or commitments at this conference.

JFB worried about Darien and Manchurian Railroad.

Conference is going good however JFB warns "controversial issues not yet reached."

Clay wants to get rid of art collection worth billions of dollars by sending it to US and then returning to Germany/ ^{in 20 years} if the German people are functioning properly.

Clay told of gold reserve of storm troopers at Frankfort. Rings, fillings, crowns from people killed.

WJB: Russian soldiers here do not compare with Americans and British either in dress, physique or military decorum; yet Clay says these are the best Stalin has.

Clay opposes Ruhr state.

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July 19, 1945

Big 3 meeting. Stalin wants Franco busted. Churchill against. Truman suggests referring to foreign ministers. Churchill opposes.

Stalin: London government of Poland should be liquidated. All agree to recognize new Polish provisional government.

July 20, 1945

At foreign ministers' meeting, JFB and Molotov argue over reparations against Italy. In the afternoon at the Big 3 meeting, Stalin agrees that Italy should not pay. Foreign ministers council is agreed on with London as site.

WJB: JFB determined to outmaneuver Stalin on China. Hopes that Soong will stand firm and Russia will not go into the war. Then he feels Japan will surrender before Russia goes to war and this will save China. If Russia goes in the war, he knows Stalin will take over and China will suffer.

JFB impressed with Truman team of Vardeman and Vaughan. Quotes Vaughan: "Stalin most likeable horse thief I have ever seen."

Big 3 reach tentative agreement on dividing Germany's naval ships and merchant marine ships after the war with Japan.

Churchill wants to preserve the technical improvements of the German submarines and to sink them.

July 21, 1945

Foreign ministers meeting: Molotov agrees with the right of American press correspondents to move into Poland but says there has been no suppression. Harriman, Dunn and Eden cannot furnish specific examples.

Big 3 meeting: Press question is raised and it is agreed to write provisions in agreement. Discussion of Polish boundaries: Stalin wants them fixed now; Churchill and Truman want this held up for the peace conference.

WJB prepares memos for JFB on Argentina, reeducation of the German people and system of missions reporting direct to the President.

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July 22, 1945

Big 3 discuss western boundary for Poland; general discussion of trusteeships. D. Russell, WJB meet in committee with Gromyko presiding. 3 issues on which no agreement reached: (1) Entry of correspondents. Russians agree to work to facilitate coverage but object to word "entry"; (2) Russians do not agree to declaration that there would be no political censorship; (3) Russia objects to a declaration of freedom of the press for liberated areas and satellite nations.

Luben exercised about lack of Russian cooperation on reparations.

WJB: It is becoming more apparent that Russians have gone imperialistic and are out to extend their sphere of influence in all directions and wherever possible. If they maintain present demands and positions doubtful if very much will be accomplished.

July 23, 1945

USSR more agreeable.

Dardanelles: Russia took position that Russia and Turkey must cooperate, all Russia desires is assurance that straits will be kept open to commerce and allied warships. Best way would be to establish bases. Truman then read paper proposing international trusteeship for bases in the Dardanelles. Stalin thanked Truman and wanted time to study. WJB wants an interim report so that Churchill will not "scoop" the conference while in London.

Brand, of Great Britain, comes by; thinks Churchill through after election.

Truman, JFB and Leahy walk to Churchill's house for dinner. Stalin arrived in big automobile with a troop of guards. JFB thinks Stalin was impressed by democratic way in which Americans came to dinner. Stalin toasts next meeting in Tokyo.

WJB: The photographers had a busy time tonight photographing celebrities. After Stalin and the American dinner guests arrived, a small meek-moused man came in very obtrusively and the photographers did not even take time to photograph him.

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After he was in, someone asked who he was, and no one seemed to know. However, a few days later when this meek-mild mannered man had been elected Prime Minister of Great Britain, the photographers kicked themselves for not taking his picture, because they found that they had no shots of Atlee while at Potsdam which were good for publication.

July 24, 1945

Big 3: long discussion on recognition of satellites; Russia wants Finland, Rumania Bulgaria and Hungary.

WJB: JFB "put out" with Russians and apparently the President will return with a bad taste in his mouth toward the Soviets.

JFB: "Give them something today, they forget that tomorrow and want something else."

JFB told the Russians there appeared to be no chance for an agreement on reparations.

WJB: JFB says somebody made an awful mistake in bringing about a situation where Russia was permitted to come out of the war with the power she will have. He said England should have never permitted Hitler to rise--that the German people under a democracy would have been a far superior ally than Russia. He fears there is too much difference in the ideologies of the US and Great Britain to work out a long-time program of cooperation.

*****Truman tells Stalin of the bomb after the meeting. Truman dropped over and nonchalantly told Stalin of the atomic bomb. Apparently the way Truman put it was that those high explosives which they had been working on had proved successful.

JFB thinks Stalin did not catch the significance. All Stalin said: "That is great, let them have it." JFB thinks importance will sink in. Tests exceeded expectation.

JFB: Japanese Ambassador to Russia warned his government that same would happen to Japan that happened to Germany. Emperor replied would fight to the last man unless no unconditional surrender.

Truman wired Chiang that he did not expect China to yield further than the terms of the Yalta agreement.

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WJB: JFB still hoping for time, believing after atomic bomb, Japan will surrender and Russia will not get in so much on the kill, thereby being in a position to press for claims against China.

Stalin on Turkey: All Russia asks for is a mutual protection military alliance. Turkey refused to accept present borders. JFB thinks this is a matter between Turkey and Russia and not for decision at conference.

JFB thought that Churchill would want a warning for Japan. Instead:

"Tell them nothing--they did not give any warning when they bombed Pearl Harbor and killed and mangled your boys."

July 25, 1945

WJB meets with Galbrath, Baldwin and others who offer observations:

1. Germany mobilized 16 of 85 million men.
2. Germany had two new weapons--a new jet plane and anti-aircraft flak.
3. 10 to 20% of German industry was out at the war's end; underground manufacturing was effective--they had more ball bearings being produced at the end of the war than at any other time.
4. Hitler was a master of detail, even deciding such questions as changing from one type of plane to another.
5. Berlin was destroyed long before the surrender; Hitler operated from an underground office.
6. Germany did a great job mobilizing agriculture. Backe and Perry the top men, Perry as head of OWM.
7. German files contained a complete WPB chart of American war production.
8. Air bombing was most effective against synthetic oil plants and transportation; this caused Germany to lose the war.
9. Rhine and canal system of transportation blocked by down railroad and highway bridges.
10. Germans did not understand present hard policy. Thought we would let them go ahead on non-war industry and agriculture.

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Big 3 discuss Polish boundary. Stalin wants recognition of Balkan states more than anything else. JFB feels Italy's entrance in the UN is not worth that price. Committee is appointed to draft a communique; committee includes Wilder, Foote and WJB from US.

July 26, 1945

Observations: Everyone had operated on the theory that Churchill would return after the election. Stalin remarked that Atlee did not seem avid for power. Only spoke twice--once on political principles for Germany, other time on having the Foreign Ministers Council set up offices in London. He was described by one as being Churchill's toy who could be wound up by the Prime Minister and then made to perform at will.

WJB: Germany is a beautiful country. Why the Germans could not be satisfied with a country like this is a question that I thought of all during the trip.

Churchill's defeat: Everyone here apparently caught napping. Would have been better to end the conference on Thursday. Too bad they did not go through with my interim communique.

Joint message to Japan released; prelude to the atomic bomb.

July 27, 1945

Important day--either Russia's going to play ball and quit wanting so much or our relations will deteriorate.

Showdown at foreign ministers level. JFB a little ruffled, Molotov stood him up for lunch.

WJB: JFB and the President have been becoming more exasperated with the Russians every day. The President has been calling them SOB's for several days. Time for plain talk. Molotov upset US released statement on Japan without consulting Russia. JFB told Molotov that Russia was not at war. The President thought it would be embarrassing to him to see such a statement before it was issued. Since Churchill had signed it, the US wanted it out before he resigned. This seemed to pacify Molotov some.

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Reparations and Italy produced frank talk. Our reparations commission believes Germany cannot stand \$20 billion. Russia thinks it can plus \$ $\frac{1}{2}$ billion against Italy and Austria each. Yalta agreement brought up; JFB says Yalta protocol was to be the basis of discussion.

JFB: "If you say I owe you a million dollars and I say I will discuss it with you, that does not mean I am going to write you a check for a million dollars."

Molotov: "I see." Later, however, he repeated the question.

Cannot agree with Russia on a reparations formula. JFB tells Molotov of a report of Russia stripping American plants in Berlin and moving materiel out of the zone as loot instead of reparations.

JFB: "Our people will not understand that kind of conduct and they will protest bitterly." Molotov insisted the US had done the same. JFB said yes with one plant as a model study and they shouldn't even have done that. JFB says if there is no agreement, then each will take reparations from its own zone.

JFB then asks to withdraw the American paper on admitting Italy to the UN.

Molotov does not understand. (Throughout, Molotov tried to use the paper to get a declaration against Franco and for recognition of the Rumanian and Bulgarian governments.) JFB admits he made a mistake in submitting the paper, but Molotov still says he does not understand.

JFB: "Mr. Molotov, I brought a little Italian baby to this conference. Russia first put Franco's britches on him, then Great Britain puts a neutral shirt on him, then Russia puts a Rumanian and Bulgarian coat on him. I admit my mistake. I should never have brought this baby here, but Russia and Britain have dressed him up and he is your baby. I throw him to you."

JFB and Molotov plan to conclude on Sunday and leave Monday.

July 28, 1945

First Big 3 meeting with Atlee. Stalin told of another bid from Japan to mediate

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the peace. His answer the same--no. Some detected in Stalin's remarks a mild reflection on the US for not consulting with Russia before sending the joint communique.

More discussion on Italy; JFB reiterates his position.

Stalin: would help the feelings of people in the Balkans to recognize the governments as he suggested.

Bevins: not interested in the feeling of the Balkan people, but the feeling in the House of Commons was what interested him.

Atlee held long talk with Truman and JFB.

Little hope that any more agreements will come out of the conference and will end with not too good relations between the US and the USSR.

July 29, 1945--Sunday

Little action. Stalin was to have lunch with Truman and JFB, however, according to Molotov he had a head cold.

Drinks: Truman, JFB, Ross, Roseman, Bohlen and WJB. President very cheerful as he played the piano. Delighted in having you listen and ask questions.

WJB works on communique. Leave time moved up to Wednesday.

Clay over for lunch. Reveals Germany wants to sign armistice with US. He has no worry about holding the Russians. Hitler used about 120 divisions in holding Russia's 450 divisions.

July 30, 1945

JFB did great job presenting a compromise on reparations.

Molotov objected to percentage figures and matter referred to Big 3.

Other matters: war criminals, political principles for Germany, anti-Russian activities but no definite agreements.

Bevins' first meeting, presided and handled self well; he and JFB get along well.

Communique committee: British and Soviets seem to like draft prepared by WJB and Foote

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July 31, 1945

This was the big day of the conference. Big 3 met this afternoon and began shelling corn. JFB saved conference with compromise on reparations, Balkans and satellites and other thorny problems.

Stalin looked immaculate in his white coat, blue trousers, and gold medal on his chest. Heavy neck, strong face, twinkle in his eye. He strokes his mustache which is gray. Good set of hair, laughs a lot and is almost a chain smoker.

Atlee speaks firmly but does not have the force of Churchill. Truman much like Atlee. Laughs with Stalin. JFB does much talking for him.

August 1, 1945

Communique: agreement except on introduction, Tangiers, Rumanian oil equipment removal and military talks.

On the first draft--WJB confined military talks to affairs in Europe. Galinski wanted the limitation stricken to appear military talks included Japan war.

Decided to pass on to Big 3.

Big 3: (1) compromise in the language of the protocol agreed upon.

(2) Communique--British with a new introduction which satisfactory to us.

Russia accepted with some bantering. Russia got Rumanian oil equipment stricken; Britain had Tangiers knocked out; Iran also out. Truman unable to get waterways in. On military talks, Stalin immediately had words, "in Europe," stricken, showing he wanted the world to think his moving in on Japan was coming.

Conference ended on a high note of harmony.

Atlee and Truman thank Stalin for the fine treatment they received.

It was noticeable that Stalin was keeping his eyes on Byrnes as he concluded his talk, and then he launched into a praise of Byrnes for the fine work he had done.

(Agreed version)

Stalin: "I should also like to express the thanks of the Soviet delegation to

Secretary Byrnes who has worked harder perhaps than any of us. He has brought us together in reaching so many important decisions. These sentiments, Mr. Byrnes, come from my heart."

Byrnes: "I appreciate very much the kind statements of the Generalissimo and I am glad he feels that, working with my colleagues, I have made a contribution to the success of this conference."

Stalin: "I think we all can agree this conference has been a success."

August 2, 1945

7:20 AM--leave Potsdam for Gatow Airfield.

8:00 AM--Take off.

11:50 AM--Land near Plymouth, at Harrowbeer.

2:00 PM--board Augusta.

JFB lunches with the King aboard the Renown.

JFB says Bevin is a John L. Lewis; expects difficulty with him in the foreign ministers meeting.

WJB: After the President waved goodbye to the King, he came down, and as he passed me he breathed a sigh of relief to be on the way back home and away from the foreign big shots.

Truman: "If those SOB's want to see me again, they will have to come to Washington."

JFB said the President was just talking and did not really mean that, because he liked the show very much.

Truman singing the praises of Byrnes. Both hit the Bourbon bottle rather heavy.

JFB gave Ben Cohen hell for wet nursing Roseman. Also gave the White House group hell for leaving their posts to sightsee. Feeling no pain.

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JFB = JAMES F. BYRNES

Aboard the Augusta, the atomic bombs, the surrender
Journal entries

August 3, 1945

President, Leahy and JFB agreed Japan looking for peace. President afraid they will sue for peace through Russia instead of some country like Sweden.

JFB, Truman chide Leahy not to hold out news on the atomic bomb. Leahy still doubtful.

This the subject of much discussion aboard the Renown. As JFB was leaving, the King grabbed his arm and said: "Now if the Admiral here does not give you the right information, let me know and I will send out a ship for it."

JFB holds a press conference on Potsdam.

August 4, 1945

President and JFB discuss Drew Pearson's glorification of Morgenthau. JFB chided Vardaman on leak. JFB does not care about Pearson blaming him for Morgenthau's dismissal but is concerned about the leak. Someone revealed that the President aboard the ship going to Antwerp had declined to issue a dispatch that Morgenthau would be the US representative on the Breton Woods setup.

Truman told JFB not to pay attention to columnists.

HT: "They have said everything in the world about me, but they have not hurt me."

Truman then related the story on Morgenthau: Morgenthau came in, said that rumors that he would not stay as Secretary of Treasury were undermining his position and as he told the President, he was ready to resign. President told him he wanted him to stay until the next bond drive was over and possibly til the end of the war with Japan. Morgenthau said ok but wanted it in a letter. Truman got mad and would not write such a letter. Morgenthau insisted. Truman: "Well, I suggest you let me have your resignation." Morgenthau wrote it and it was quickly accepted. President wanted Morgenthau to stay until he returned from Europe. Apparently Roseman had cooked up plan to have Morgenthau appointed to Breton Woods after Morgenthau said he wanted to quit immediately.