

THREE-POWER DECLARATIONS OF THE TEHRAN CONFERENCE

TREATY AT A GLANCE

Completed

December 1, 1943, at Tehran, Iran

Signatories

United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union

Overview

The first Big Three summit, the Tehran Conference covered the shape Europe would take in the postwar world. It was at this conference that President Franklin D. Roosevelt won an agreement in principle from Winston Churchill and Joseph Stalin to create a United Nations organization after the war.

Historical Background

The last of a series of diplomatic and strategic planning conferences held by the Allied powers in 1943, the Tehran Conference was also the first Big Three summit. Soviet premier Joseph Stalin had not attended the meetings in Casablanca, Quebec, or Cairo, and neither U.S. president Franklin Delano Roosevelt nor British prime minister Winston Churchill came to Moscow in October (see CASABLANCA DECLARATION, CAIRO DECLARATION, and the THREE-POWER DECLARATIONS OF THE TEHRAN CONFERENCE). All were present at the November 25–December 1 conference, and for the first time the personal and ideological dynamics that would have such impact on the peace process following World War II came into operation.

From Stalin's point of view, the meeting probably only underscored the validity of marxist theory, as the inevitable conflict between national imperial powers predicted by communist ideology had certainly become evident. It was hardly surprising that Roosevelt, the product of a Puritan culture that just yesterday had clung to its moral isolation from the rest of a corrupt world, should have trouble with the contradictions inherent in the views of Winston Churchill, representing a colonial empire that had been protecting its assets and imposing its will on the world for two and a half centuries via a combination of sea power, free trade, and diplomatic chicanery. To Stalin both allies no doubt seemed self-serving, the one wishing to remake the world in its image, the other

seeking to maintain a centuries-old policy of a balance of power in Europe.

As for the Soviet dictator himself, Churchill certainly had no illusions about the ruthlessness of this canny survivor of the treacherous political culture of the Bolsheviks, who clung to power by relentlessly destroying any who could even remotely pose a threat to his rule and who, as it turned out, engaged in mass murder as blithely as any Nazi. Roosevelt, on the other hand, chose to believe he could reason with the man if only he could get beyond Stalin's quite evident suspicions. So while Roosevelt openly, even buoyantly, criticized Churchill in "Uncle Joe's" presence and demanded that the prime minister come to terms with the need to end European colonizing, including British imperialism, after the war, Stalin steadfastly insisted on the strategies and policies that would allow the Soviet Union precisely to realize many of old imperial Russia's fondest dreams in eastern Europe.

Churchill—and others, even other Americans—brooded in silence. Churchill wanted to fight the Nazis to the last drop of Russian blood, and Stalin knew it; Stalin wanted to establish hegemony over eastern Europe, and Churchill knew it. Roosevelt wanted to end the war and build a new world order in which such wars could never recur, and neither Churchill nor Stalin believed it.

Stalin demanded the territories he had already gained with the acquiescence of the Nazis—the 1941 frontier in Poland at the Curzon Line (Poland could be compensated with German land to the west)—plus the

Baltic coast of East Prussia. Churchill advocated the breaking up of Germany and turning the Danube area—Austria, Hungary, Bavaria—into a “peaceful, cowl-like confederation.” He wanted similar confederations in eastern Europe, but Stalin, worried that his Allies were reviving the notion of a cordon sanitaire between the West and the Bolsheviks that the peace-makers at Versailles tried to establish in 1918, objected, especially since it would interfere with his plans to establish hegemony over the area, piece by piece if need be. No, he said, the Allies should Balkanize eastern Europe, punish France for collaborating and strip away her colonies, and keep Poland and Italy as weak as they ever were. Stalin, as some at the conference, such as U.S. diplomat Charles Bolen, noted at the time, wanted the Soviet Union to be the only important military power and political force on the continent of Europe.

All this the Big Three discussed and debated, but that is not what they declared to the world public. Instead, they chose to emphasize the agreement Roosevelt wrung from the others to form an international organization that would become the forum for the globe’s diplomacy in a postwar world—led, naturally enough, by the United States, Britain, the Soviet Union, and, he insisted, China.

Terms

The Tehran declarations, then, fit the tone of the propaganda proclamations issued by the previous summit conferences, but for the first time the Allies floated the notion of a United Nations to arise from the ashes of the most destructive war in history.



Declaration of the Three Powers

We the President of the United States, the Prime Minister of Great Britain, and the Premier of the Soviet Union, have met these four days past, in this, the Capital of our Ally, Iran, and have shaped and confirmed our common policy.

We express our determination that our nations shall work together in war and in the peace that will follow.

As to war-our military staffs have joined in our round table discussions, and we have concerted our plans for the destruction of the German forces. We have reached complete agreement as to the scope and timing of the operations to be undertaken from the east, west and south.

The common understanding which we have here reached guarantees that victory will be ours.

And as to peace—we are sure that our concord will win an enduring Peace. We recognize fully the supreme responsibility resting upon us and all the United Nations to make a peace which will command the goodwill of the overwhelming mass of

the peoples of the world and banish the scourge and terror of war for many generations.

With our Diplomatic advisors we have surveyed the problems of the future. We shall seek the cooperation and active participation of all nations, large and small, whose peoples in heart and mind are dedicated, as are our own peoples, to the elimination of tyranny and slavery, oppression and intolerance. We will welcome them, as they may choose to come, into a world family of Democratic Nations.

No power on earth can prevent our destroying the German armies by land, their U Boats by sea, and their war plants from the air.

Our attack will be relentless and increasing.

Emerging from these cordial conferences we look with confidence to the day when all peoples of the world may live free lives, untouched by tyranny, and according to their varying desires and their own consciences.

We came here with hope and determination. We leave here, friends in fact, in spirit and in purpose.

Signed at Tehran, December 1, 1943

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT
WINSTON S. CHURCHILL
J. V. STALIN

Declaration of the Three Powers Regarding Iran

The President of the United States, the Premier of the U.S.S.R. and the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, having consulted with each other and with the Prime Minister of Iran, desire to declare the mutual agreement of their three Governments regarding their relations with Iran.

The Governments of the United States, the U.S.S.R., and the United Kingdom recognize the assistance which Iran has given in the prosecution of the war against the common enemy, particularly by facilitating the transportation of supplies from overseas to the Soviet Union.

The Three Governments realize that the war has caused special economic difficulties for Iran, and they are agreed that they will continue to make available to the Government of Iran such economic assistance as may be possible, having regard to the heavy demands made upon them by their world-wide military operations, and to the world-wide shortage of transport, raw materials, and supplies for civilian consumption.

With respect to the post-war period, the Governments of the United States, the U.S.S.R., and the United Kingdom are in accord with the Government of Iran that any economic problems confronting Iran at the close of hostilities should receive full consideration, along with those of other members of the United Nations, by conferences or international agencies held or created to deal with international economic matters.

The Governments of the United States, the U.S.S.R., and the United Kingdom are at one with the Government of Iran in their desire for the maintenance of the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iran. They count upon the participation of Iran, together with all other peace-loving nations, in the establishment of international peace, security and prosperity after the war, in accordance with the principles

of the Atlantic Charter, to which all four Governments have subscribed.

WINSTON S. CHURCHILL
J. STALIN
FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT



The Big Three also noted the military conclusions of the conference in relation to the continuation of the war, including the deadline that Churchill and Roosevelt had already set for the opening of the second front in Europe that had all along been the diplomatic obsession of the Russians, which now had a code name: Operation Overlord.



Military Conclusions of the Tehran Conference

The Conference:-

(1) Agreed that the Partisans in Yugoslavia should be supported by supplies and equipment to the greatest possible extent, and also by commando operations:

(2) Agreed that, from the military point of view, it was most desirable that Turkey should come into the war on the side of the Allies before the end of the year:

(3) Took note of Marshal Stalin's statement that if Turkey found herself at war with Germany, and as a result Bulgaria declared war on Turkey or attacked her, the Soviet Union would immediately be at war with

Bulgaria. The Conference further took note that this fact could be explicitly stated in the forthcoming negotiations to bring Turkey into the war:

(4) Took note that Operation OVERLORD would be launched during May 1944, in conjunction with an operation against Southern France. The latter operation would be undertaken in as great a strength as availability of landing-craft permitted. The Conference further took note of Marshal Stalin's statement that the Soviet forces would launch an offensive at about the same time with the object of preventing the German forces from transferring from the Eastern to the Western Front:

(5) Agreed that the military staffs of the Three Powers should henceforward keep in close touch with each other in regard to the impending operations in Europe. In particular it was agreed that a cover plan to mystify and mislead the enemy as regards these operations should be concerted between the staffs concerned.

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT
JOSEPH V. STALIN
WINSTON S. CHURCHILL

TEHRAN, December 1, 1943.



Consequences

At Tehran the Allies got a glimpse of Stalin's vision for postwar Europe, one Roosevelt chose to ignore and Churchill to brood over. Stalin got what he wanted most: a commitment to the opening of a second front on the Continent.