About H. Hopkins’ Visit-Personal Representative of F. Roosevelt-To the USSR (Facts from Documents)

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Abstract: The article is devoted to the Soviet-American relationship in the beginning of the Great Patriotic War when intensive interaction between 2 countries began which was determined by necessity to defeat common enemy-aggressive fascist-military alliance of Germany, Japan, Italy and their satellites. Official position of the USA administration from the very beginning of the Great Patriotic War was very watchful. But as the heroic fight of the Red Army was reaching its highest point Franklin Delano Roosevelt and his close associates started to express the opinion about more active collaboration with anti-Hitler coalition. Important mile stone for development of Soviet-American relationship was the visit of H. Hopkins - influential American diplomat and devoted friend of the President Roosevelt - to Moscow. The purpose of Hopkins' mission was discussion of possibility of American military and economic aid to the Soviet Union in the framework of lend-lease program.

Key words: The Great Patriotic War · International relationship · Military diplomacy · Economic partnership · The Soviet Union · The USA · Hopkins’ mission · Lend-lease · Stalin · Roosevelt

INTRODUCTION

Phenomenon of close military-economic partnership between the USA and USSR during Great Patriotic War is traditionally in focus of both Russian and foreign experts. The new monograph of Albert Weeks—the prominent military historian, professor of New-York university—is one more attempt to cover those events. In his work he considers the program of land lease as an example of huge mutual trust in the struggle against common enemy and emphasizes special role played by Hopkins’ mission [1].

Harry Hopkins under the request of F.D. Roosevelt met Soviet ambassador, K. Umansky, in the USA in July of 1941. NKID (People’s Commissariat of foreign affairs) of the USSR gets a telegram from him which among other things informed about the following: “Harry Hopkins, a political figure of the USA and devoted friend of Roosevelt, who is the main representative of Roosevelt in the sphere of supplies to England, China (by lend-lease), is going to do the same in regard of our country also [2]. Hopkins side by side with Ekes belongs to the progressive wing of Roosevelt associates, he is very influential person…”[3].

K. Umansky informs: “2-hours conversation with Hopkins confirmed our information which we received about him during 2 years-about very friendly relation of this man to us, that he is a man who stand for his own honest believes. It is very good that our purchases will be in his hands…”[3].

Before arriving at Moscow H. Hopkins was in London. W. Churchill wrote about him in July 28, 1941 in his private message to I. Stalin: "Harry Hopkins was with me these days. Last week he asked the President to allow him to visit Moscow. I want to warn you that this man is sincerely devoted to democracy and is eager to defeat Hitler... He is closest and personal representative of the President. The president has now given him full instructions and he is leaving my house today for you. You can accept him very trustfully: he is your friend and our friend. He will help you in preparation of the future victory and organization of supplies to Russia for prolonged period" [4].

Main Part: Harry Hopkins flies for almost 48 hours from Scotland to Arkhangelsk and in the second half of 28th of July is in Moscow.
In the evening, on arrival date, Harry Hopkins accompanied by American ambassador in Moscow, Steinhardt and the third secretary of American Embassy Reinhardt was received by I. Stalin in the presence of M. Molotov.

"After mutual exchange of greetings Hopkins declared that Roosevelt asked him to go to Moscow from London to inform Stalin and Molotov about position of the President regarding current situation in Europe. Hopkins clarified that he is not a diplomatic representative or the representative of some government department, but a close friend of Roosevelt with whom he works and lives. Thus, his visit to Moscow is not a special visit of government character, but a visit under request of private person. Roosevelt asked Hopkins to say to Stalin that he is fascinated by heroic fight of USSR and the success of its army. Roosevelt is sure of the USSR's victory and is ready to do his best to provide USSR with any aid. Hopkins explained that he is a person who is authorized by the President to regulate and solve all the questions regarding leasing of weapons by the USA.

Then Hopkins said that he would like to inform Stalin and Molotov about Roosevelt’s opinion of the current events.

Firstly, Roosevelt considers Hopkins the enemy of all the world, secondly he is ready to keep his word and immediately provide USSR with any aid without any stipulation. However, this immediate aid for the USSR, in Hopkins’ opinion, is divided into 2 parts: aid which can be provided during next 2 weeks and the aid by weapons which will be provided for the USSR during all the war until total defeat of Hitler. Hopkins assured Stalin that Roosevelt will keep his promise" [3].

Stalin agreed at these divisions and included into the category of immediate needs “anti-aircraft guns of 20-37 mm caliber producing 120 - 180 shots per minute, 7,62 mm rifles and aluminum” [3] and “the fighter air planes and bombers of medium range-600-1100 km” [3]. Use of lend-lease program, in opinion of American military historian George Mellinger, played very important role in success of Soviet aircraft in break-point moments of the Great Patriotic War. Arguments given by Mellinger: the words of glorious Soviet ace Alexander Pokryshkin who called American fighter air plane Bell P-39 Aerocobra his “favourite airplane”. By the end of the war more than 100 Soviet flyers became aces thanks to lend-lease of fighter air planes, many of them became the Heroes of the USSR [5], argues American expert.

Besides Stalin Harry Hopkins met People’s Commissar of foreign affairs V. Molotov. The topic of their conversation was situation in Far East [3]. At the end “Hopkins thanked for provided opportunity to visit the USSR and see Stalin and Molotov face-to-face”. Hopkins promised once more to inform Roosevelt after his arrival at Washington about situation and moods in USSR in the same spirit as he told Molotov.

Molotov from his side expressed satisfaction with his acquaintance with such a wonderful man like Hopkins about whom he had learned a lot from the press. The conversations with Hopkins assured Molotov that his companion is a true friend of the Soviet Union. Molotov added that the Americans’ belief that Soviet people are fighting for righteous things, confidence that the Soviet Union is invincible give the people of the Soviet Union forces to fight for independence and self-sufficiency of the country, to stop and defeat the enemy. This is single feeling of all the people of the USSR.

Molotov asked Hopkins to inform the President Roosevelt about it [3].

In the evening of 31st of July Henry Hopkins was received by Stalin again. The conversation lasted for more than 3,5 hours. American historian David L. Roll published in 2013 biographic study of life and activity of Henry Hopkins whom he associated with exclusive role of this politician in external policy of the USA during Great Patriotic War. Also the book emphasizes this important historical fact-extremely high degree of Stalin’s trust which was gained by Hopkins. The Soviet leader and American diplomat could have heart-to-heart talk [6].

Harry Hopkins under request of Roosevelt obtained detailed first-hand information about military operations in Soviet-German front. I. Stalin explained once again what Red Army needs most of all.

Harry Hopkins considered his meetings in the Kremlin and the conversations with Stalin as a break-point in relationship between the USA, England on the one hand and the Soviet Union - on the other hand [7].

On July 31st there was a conference at which Hopkins declared what he told Stalin under the request of Roosevelt: “Who is fighting against Hitler is a righteous party in this conflict... the USA are ready to help this party” [6].

Negotiations with Soviet leaders produced big impression on Harry Hopkins who informed Roosevelt: "I am quite sure in regard of this front... I saw strong confidence in the victory" [8].
Hopkins’ report to the President to a great extent facilitated “formation of further course of American administration in regard to provision of aid to the USSR in its struggle against fascist aggression”. The road to making practical steps in this direction was opened.

CONCLUSION

Thus, visit of Harry Hopkins facilitated improvement of American-Soviet relationship and established the basis for holding in Moscow in October of 1941 the Conference of the representatives of the USSR, USA, Great Britain who confirmed the beginning of collaboration of the anti-Hitler coalition countries [9].

Inference: In November 7, 1941 as a result of further negotiation between USA and USSR the lend-lease law was extended to the USSR [10]. This could not happen without prominent American, H. Hopkins.

REFERENCES

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