

PREFACE

It has long been the custom of the United States Government to release to the public, after a suitable lapse of time, a substantially complete documentary record of our country's diplomacy. This custom, established early in our history, was crystallized by President Lincoln and Secretary of State Seward through the inauguration of the series of volumes now entitled *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers* (then called *Papers Relating to Foreign Affairs*).

The publication of the *Foreign Relations* volumes has tended to fall increasingly far behind the period which they cover. During the past two decades, this lag has reached nearly 18 years. This gap is now being gradually reduced, thanks to the action of the Appropriations Committees of the two Houses of Congress, and efforts will continue to reduce it, due consideration being given to the necessity of avoiding any harm to our current negotiations with other countries or to our national security interests.

This volume of documents on the conferences at Malta and Yalta is the first to appear in a special series of *Foreign Relations* volumes on World War II conferences attended by President Roosevelt or President Truman, along with Prime Minister Churchill or Marshal Stalin, or both of the latter. The series is part of a special *Foreign Relations* publication program prepared by the Department of State, in response to expressions of interest by several Senators and the Senate Committee on Appropriations in its report for fiscal year 1954. This program also includes the preparation and release of a special series on United States relations with China, 1942-1949, as well as the accelerated publication of the regular volumes of the *Foreign Relations* annual series already compiled through the year 1941.

In order to make this volume as complete and useful as possible, the Department of State has not only drawn upon its own files, but has also sought the cooperation of other agencies and individuals, to whom the Department is grateful for their assistance. The compiling and professional editing of this volume were done by a special staff in the Historical Division of the Department of State, under the direction of the Chief of the Division. The technical editing was done by the Division of Publishing Services.

