

A proposal by Byelo-Russia, also based on a boundary west of the French line, represented a compromise between the Yugoslav and French proposals. It would have given Gorizia to Yugoslavia, and would also have eliminated the corridor along the coast connecting the Free Territory with Italy. It was defeated by 13 votes to 5, with 2 abstentions, New Zealand voting against.

The South African delegation moved an amendment which would have provided for the extension of the boundaries of the Free Territory of Trieste to include Western Istria, the coastal areas which are predominantly populated by Italians, and which were awarded to Yugoslavia under the Big Four proposals. The South Africans based their amendment also on the fact that the principle of the ethnic line having been abandoned for that of ethnic equilibrium, and the Free Territory having been carved out of predominantly Italian territory, the French line no longer represented the balance. The South Africans therefore thought that the Italian population on the west coast should remain separated from Yugoslav rule, and instead be placed under the international rule of the Free Territory. This, they argued, would leave the smallest possible number of people under foreign rule and would eliminate one cause of international friction.

This amendment was supported by New Zealand, but was defeated by 12 votes to 6, with 2 abstentions. While the U.S.S.R. supported the French line in the votes, they nevertheless made it clear during the debates that they regarded it as the minimum of justice to Yugoslavia, and made no secret of the fact that they would have preferred a settlement more favourable.

The Yugoslavs, for their part, at a very early stage bluntly stated that they would not give up Gorizia, which had been awarded to Italy by the French line, and that they would not sign a peace treaty "based on the French line and its injustice."

The United States and United Kingdom delegations emphasized throughout the discussions that the question of the boundary and the nature of the permanent Statute of the Free Territory of Trieste constituted within the French line were linked as one decision and one agreement. Both the United States and United Kingdom delegations had accepted the French line as the eastern frontier of Italy and of the Free Territory as part of the comprehensive agreement which included the setting-up of the Free Territory of Trieste. The two delegations made it clear that their agreement to one part of this decision was contingent upon agreement upon all parts of it, including a satisfactory Statute for the Free Territory. The British delegate went further, and stated that if the Trieste settlement did not provide real guarantees for its integrity and independence and for the protection of the rights of its citizens, then the United Kingdom Government would have to review its whole position.