**With reference to the sources and your understanding of the historical context, assess the value of these sources to a historian studying the Soviet attitude to the future of Poland**

**Source 1**

*From a conversation between Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill. This occurred during the Yalta Conference, on 6 February 1945:*

It is a question of security of the state not only because we are on Poland’s frontier but also because throughout history Poland has always been in the corridor for attack on Russia. It is sufficient that during the last thirty years our German enemy has passed through this corridor twice. This is because Poland was weak. It is in the Russian interest as well as that of Poland that Poland be strong and powerful and in a position in her own, and in our interests to shut the corridor by her own forces. It is necessary that Poland be free, independent and powerful.

As a written record of a conversation, source A clearly shows Stalin’s stance on the Polish issue at the time of the Yalta conference held between 4th and 11th February 1945. Up to this point, all three allies had been working together in agreement to decide the fate of Germany and Nazi war criminals, as well as to discuss the potential Soviet invasion of Japan. Whilst meeting at Yalta, the question of Poland’s future was raised in seven of the eight discussions as Stalin was forcibly attempting to resolve the issue in his favour. As a public conversation, source A is non-aggressive and depicts Stalin trying to persuade the allies to see his reasoning for why the USSR should have influence over Poland. Hence, the tone is passionate - “our interests”, “Russian interests”, “It is necessary” – in order to convey Stalin’s desperation for control over Poland and hints to the first signs of Soviet dominance over the issue. The content of the source shows how Stalin believed that a “strong and powerful” Poland would prevent future invasions of the Soviet Union. By expressing his concerns of a “weak” Poland, Stalin shows his desire to control and rebuild Poland to be militarily strong enough to provide further defence of the Soviet Union. This is valuable for showing Stalin’s desire for Poland and as the USSR’s premier (since 1924) he had much experience and knowledge of military decisions and could clearly provide reasoning as to how decisions regarding Poland would most benefit Soviet interests.

However, this conversation took place after Stalin had established his own government in Lublin in July 1944 and so he already had control and influence over Poland, information that is omitted from the source. Therefore Stalin would be using this conversation to limit the Allies anger over his actions up to this point by persuading them it was in Poland’s best interests. This is further illustrates by Stalin’s use of language - “our German enemy”, ‘free independent and powerful” – which was clearly used to appeal to Roosevelt and Churchill. This negotiation would also affect how much Stalin revealed in terms of his plans for the future of Poland and so may not accurately portray his full opinions and attitudes while attempting to convince Roosevelt and Churchill that a Poland in the Soviet sphere of influence was the best course to follow. The content of the source also only gives Stalin’s reasoning regarding Poland by February 1945 and while this may add value to the source, it is limited in discussion of a long-term plan of what Stalin wanted and how he might go about achieving it. It illustrates Stalin’s side of the conversation and so doesn’t reveal the process of negotiation in response to Churchill and Roosevelt, which might add additional context to Stalin’s justifications.

Overall therefore, this source is valuable for showing Stalin’s and therefore the Soviet attitude towards post-war Poland but is mostly limited due to the nature of the conversation held at the Yalta Conference and his need to play down his true intentions for Poland.