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WAR CABINET MINUTES

SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER 1940

W.M. 239 (40) to W.M. 280 (40)
CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10 Downing Street, S.W. 1, on Monday, September 2, 1940, at 12 noon.

Present:

The Right Hon. WINSTON S. CHURCHILL, M.P., Prime Minister (in the Chair).
The Right Hon. A. GREENWOOD, M.P., Minister without Portfolio.

The following were also present:

The Right Hon. VISCOUNT CALDECOTE, Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs.
The Right Hon. Anthony Eden, M.P., Secretary of State for War.

The Right Hon. Sir ARCHIBALD SINCLAIR, Bt., M.P., Secretary of State for Air.
The Right Hon. HERBERT MORRISON, M.P., Minister of Supply (Item 11).

Mr. Ralph Assheton, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Labour (Item 11).
The Hon. Sir Alexander Cadogan, Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Items 1-10).

Admiral of the Fleet Sir Dudley Pound, First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff.

General Sir John Dill, Chief of the Imperial General Staff.

Air Marshal R. E. C. Peirse, Vice-Chief of the Air Staff.

Secretariat:

Sir EDWARD BRIDGES.
Major-General Sir Hastings Ismay.
Mr. W. D. Wilkinson.
## WAR CABINET 239 (40).

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Air Operations.

(Previous Reference: W.M. (40) 236th Conclusions, Minute 1.)

"The Battle of Britain."

1. The Prime Minister said that on the 31st August he had visited the Fighter Command during one of the big German air attacks. He had found it very instructive to watch the Officers of the Fighter Command deploying their forces and building up a front at the threatened points. He was sure that the Secretary of State for Air would welcome it if other Members of the War Cabinet were to pay similar visits.

The Prime Minister then reviewed the results of the last month of hard air fighting. We had every right to be satisfied with those results. He was tempted to ask why the enemy should continue attacks on this heavy scale—which included some days as many as 700 aircraft—if it did not represent something like their maximum effort. This might not, of course, be the explanation. But our own Air Force was stronger than ever and there was every reason to be optimistic about the 1940 Air Battle of Britain.

The War Cabinet took note of the above statement.

Naval Operations.

(Previous Reference: W.M. (40) 236th Conclusions, Minute 1.)

"Naval casualties."

The Mediterranean. Submarine operations.

2. The Chief of Naval Staff made a report on the mining of British destroyers at 1 A.M. on the 1st September. The Esk had been sunk, and they had had to sink Ironclad, 44 survivors from which had been landed at Harwich. The Express was being towed in. She had about 90 casualties. Both the Germans and ourselves had chosen that night for laying mines in the Terschelling area. The Germans had been just in front of us and our ships had run into their minefield.

The Chief of Naval Staff also gave particulars of the torpedoing of the Fiji on the afternoon of the 1st September. The Fiji was proceeding to the Clyde with a destroyer escort.

The Chief of Naval Staff also gave the latest information as to the Mediterranean position.

Our submarines claimed to have sunk a German submarine in the North Sea and to have got in two hits on Italian warships south-west of Messina. It was not clear whether the vessels hit were cruisers or destroyers.

The enemy attacks on merchant shipping had been on a reduced scale during the last few days.

The R.A.F. were making available a squadron of Whitleys to assist in the anti-U-boat campaign in the North-Western Approaches.

Reference was made to the apparently unauthorised statements which had appeared in the evening papers on the 31st August, and again in one of the Sunday papers, that the Fleet Air Arm was being re-equipped with Fulmar aircraft.

The War Cabinet—

(a) Took note of the above statements.

(b) Invited the Minister of Information to make enquiries, and to take action, with regard to the Press Reports of the re-equipment of the Fleet Air Arm with Fulmar aircraft.
3. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff reported certain minor operations which had taken place in the Middle East.

(i) Egypt.—Enemy aircraft had bombed the Suez Canal on the night of 29th August without doing any damage. The nearest bomb had fallen 300 metres away from the Canal. There had been a short enemy bombardment of the Sollum area.

(ii) East Africa.—During the period the 19th–29th August the Brigade Group at Buna had been gradually withdrawn to the line of the Waso Nyiro river, and the post was now unoccupied. A Brigade Group remained at Wajir.

The War Cabinet took note of the above statement.

4. A short discussion took place about the need for altering the present system under which large parts of the country were under air raid warnings for many hours together. The suggestions made included the following:

(i) That the system (at any rate as regards areas such as South-East England, where warnings were almost continuous) might be simplified so that there would be only three stages—the "alert," the "alarm" and the "all clear." The "alert" might be notified in some way which did not involve the use of the sirens. During the "alarm," but not before, all workers would take cover.

(ii) That factories and other establishments might be encouraged to set up a system of local warnings, such as had been initiated by the Departments in Whitehall. Under this system the greater part of the staffs did not go to the air raid shelters until they had been warned by a signal from their own spotters that enemy aircraft were close at hand.

The War Cabinet took note of the above discussion.

5. The War Cabinet were informed that civilian air raid casualties for the month of August were approximately 700 killed and 781 seriously injured. Subject to confirmation, the War Cabinet agreed that there was no reason why these figures should not be announced publicly.

6. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs drew attention to Madrid telegrams Nos. 684 and 685. The latter contained a communication from the Vichy Government to the effect that they were willing for contact to be maintained between the two Governments through the medium of their Embassies in Madrid. They stated, however, that there would be no point in a continuance of contacts if His Majesty's Government persisted in interference in the French overseas possessions.

Telegram No. 684 contained the following comments from Sir Samuel Hoare. First, the French authorities in Madrid seemed increasingly anxious to work with us. Second, some kind of relationship with the Pétain Government would help us with the Spanish Government, who regarded Marshal Pétain as the only hope
against a France totally occupied by Germany. Third, the many
difficulties about British refugees and prisoners would be greatly
facilitated by the existence of a channel of communications. These
local considerations might not weigh against the bigger issues, but
ought to be taken into account.

The Foreign Secretary said that his colleagues might well feel
that a continuance even of indirect relations with the Vichy Government
was a waste of time. Clearly we could not agree to the
demand of the Vichy Government. Nevertheless on the whole he
thought that Sir Samuel Hoare should continue discussions with
the French Ambassador in Madrid.

The War Cabinet agreed with this view.

7. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs said that
agreement had now been reached with the United States Government
and that President Roosevelt had decided to publish the exchange
of Notes the following day (Tuesday, the 3rd September) in a
message to Congress.

Various points of procedure arose: first, we should publish
the documents as a White Paper at 5 P.M. on Tuesday.

Mr. Cordell Hull had intimated (Washington telegram
No. 1886) that he wanted, for reasons of internal politics, the
question of the future of the British Fleet dealt with by an exchange
of Aide-Memoires between the State Department and the
Washington Embassy. Should the Aide-Memoire on this point be
included in our White Paper?

The War Cabinet decided against inclusion. After all, this
Aide-Memoire only repeated the Prime Ministers statement in
Parliament.

Secondly, how were the details of the agreement to be filled in.
The Foreign Secretary thought that we ought to insist on London
as the place of meeting of the British and American Experts who
were to determine the exact location of the Naval and Air Bases
in which facilities were to be granted. We might give as our
reasons:—

(a) the preoccupation of our experts with their war duties;
and

(b) the fact that we were the donors.

No objection was seen to Newfoundland representatives being
associated with these discussions.

The preliminary visits which United States Military Experts
were paying to certain of the Bases were in the nature of
reconnaissances, which would in no way prejudice the results of
the meeting of experts.

Thirdly, the War Cabinet were informed that Mr. Hull had
been anxious that the Prime Minister should not say that our offer
of facilities had been intended as a free gift. It was agreed that
there could be no question of going back on the statement already
made publicly on this point (telegram No. 2125 to Washington).

The War Cabinet—
Invited the Foreign Secretary to proceed on the lines of
the discussion.
The Baltic States.
Release of assets now blocked in London.
(Previous Reference: W.M. (40) 225th Conclusions, Minute 2.)

8. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs drew attention to Washington telegram No. 1864 and to the reply (telegram No. 2123 to Washington). Before taking a decision as to the release of the assets of the Baltic States now blocked in London, we should obtain the considered views of the United States Government. It looked as though the release of the assets would cause the United States some embarrassment.

Lord Lothian had been instructed to make it clear that we were not considering handing over the gold and ships unconditionally, but only as part of some arrangement, the counterparts of which would be compensation for the British property confiscated by Russia.

The War Cabinet took note of this statement.

The Far East.
The Burma Road.
(Previous Reference: W.M. (40) 207th Conclusions, Minute 14.)

9. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs said that within six weeks we should have to decide whether to reopen the Burma Road. He had had a preliminary exchange of views with Sir Robert Craigie (Tokyo telegram No. 1716 and Foreign Office telegram to Tokyo, No. 914).

He would be grateful for any suggestions which his colleagues might have on this problem.

In reply to a question, the Foreign Secretary said that he saw no objection to these telegrams being repeated to Mr. Menzies.

The War Cabinet took note of the above statement.

French Colonies.
(Previous Reference: W.M. (40) 238th Conclusions, Minute 6.)

10. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs read extracts from a telegram dated the 30th August from the Officer Administering the Government of Gambia which indicated that most of Senegal was anxious to adhere to General de Gaulle. The prospects in West Africa generally looked increasingly favourable.

The Prime Minister stressed the importance of an active policy in regard to the French African possessions.

The Foreign Secretary said that telegrams had also been received from the British Consul at Papeete, via New Zealand, in regard to the situation in Tahiti. He asked that the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs and he should have authority to decide, in consultation with other Departments concerned, on the reply to be sent to the Governor-General of New Zealand as to the action to be taken.

The War Cabinet agreed to this proposal.

Aerodrome Construction.
Allocation of labour and materials.
(Previous Reference: W.M. (40) 139th Conclusions, Minute 2.)

11. The War Cabinet had before them a Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Air (W.P. (40) 347) asking for a special priority, higher than "Works and Buildings priority A," for the construction of additional aerodromes.

The Minister without Portfolio said that cement presented special difficulties. The maximum capacity of 750,000 tons a month was below the current requirements of Departments. Stocks had been eaten into since May and were now very small. Distribution was also a problem, as 50 per cent. of production was in the Thames and Medway area, and cement had usually been delivered by sea.

The following points were made in discussion:—

(1) The demands of the War Office for cement and other materials for defence works would fall off rapidly.
Royal Air Force.

Training of pilots.
Proposal to send flying training schools abroad.

(Previous Reference: W.M. (40) 236th Conclusions, Minute 1.)

12. The Prime Minister said that, after Friday's Meeting of the War Cabinet, further discussion had taken place between the Secretary of State for Air and the Minister of Aircraft Production, and agreement had been reached.

The Prime Minister invited the Secretary of State for Air to circulate a Memorandum setting out the agreement reached. Unless any member of the War Cabinet saw objection to the course proposed, this matter need not be further discussed by the War Cabinet.

The War Cabinet—

Approved the procedure proposed, and invited the Secretary of State for Air to circulate a Memorandum to the War Cabinet as proposed.

This memorandum was subsequently circulated as W.P. (40)
13. The War Cabinet had before them a Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Air proposing that the Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Bomber Command, should be authorised to carry out firing over certain sparsely populated areas in the United Kingdom, at altitudes of 10,000 feet and upwards (W.P. (40) 345).

The Secretary of State for Air explained that there was very little risk of casualties from spent bullets, which were equivalent to a 1-lb. weight falling 6 feet.

General agreement was expressed with the Secretary of State's proposal.

Discussion ensued whether a public announcement should be made about this measure.

The War Cabinet—

(1) Approved the proposals in paragraph 3 of the Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Air (W.P. (40) 345).

(2) Decided that, for the present at any rate, no public announcement should be made in regard to this measure. If public opinion should make it desirable, an announcement could be made later.

14. The War Cabinet had before them a Memorandum by the Secretary of State for War in regard to the provisional shipping arrangements for a further convoy to the Middle East, to be despatched towards the end of September (W.P. (40) 341).

The Secretary of State for War said that he understood that the Minister of Shipping now saw his way to make shipping available for 22,000 men.

The proposal to include in this convoy the personnel of further armoured units was not, of course, intended in any way to prejudge a decision whether, when the time came, these further units should be sent to the Middle East. This must depend on the general position by, say, the 10th September, by which date it would be necessary to decide whether these armoured units should be included in the convoy. A decision on this point could not be dissociated from the likelihood of invasion of these islands being attempted in the autumn. Some discussion on this latter question followed, which is recorded in the Secretary's Standard File of War Cabinet Conclusions.

The War Cabinet—

(1) Agreed that provisional arrangements should be made on the basis that the convoy despatched to the Middle East towards the end of September would include capacity for approximately 22,000 troops.

(2) Took note that the decision whether further armoured units should be included in this convoy would have to be taken not later than, say, the 10th September.

15. The War Cabinet were informed that it was intended that the meeting of Parliament on Thursday, the 5th September, should be for one day only. After the Prime Minister's statement there would be an opportunity for debate. Parliament would then adjourn for a further fortnight, subject to earlier recall if necessary.

The Prime Minister said that he proposed in his statement on Thursday to deal with the following topics:—

First, he would propose to make a guarded statement on the progress of the air battle, indicating that the results were generally satisfactory.
Secondly, he hoped that it would be possible to make some statement as to compensation for air raid victims. The Chancellor of the Exchequer hoped to have proposals on the subject ready that evening.

Thirdly, he intended to refer to the internment of aliens, and to explain that, at the time of the country's greatest danger, the War Cabinet had decided, as an act of high policy, that large numbers of aliens must be interned, notwithstanding the great hardships involved. We were now in a stronger position and could afford to release aliens quickly, even though this might involve some risk.

Fourthly, he would refer to the agreement with the United States of America (see Minute 7 above).

He would have liked also to deal with railway rates, but the enquiry on this matter would not be completed by Thursday.

The War Cabinet—

Gave general approval to the lines of the statement indicated by the Prime Minister.

16. The War Cabinet took note of the Fifth Report by the Chiefs of Staff on the Organisation of Allied Naval, Army and Air Contingents (W.P. (40) 344).
SECRET.

W.M. (40)

240th Conclusions.

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It is requested that special care may be taken to ensure the secrecy of this document.

WAR CABINET 240 (40).

CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10 Downing Street, S.W. 1, on Tuesday, September 3, 1940, at 12 noon.

Present:

The Right Hon. WINSTON S. CHURCHILL, M.P., Prime Minister (in the Chair).
The Right Hon. A. GREENWOOD, M.P., Minister without Portfolio.
The Right Hon. VISCOUNT HALIFAX, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.
The Right Hon. LORD BEAVERBROOK, Minister of Aircraft Production.

The following were also present:
The Right Hon. Sir KINGSLEY WOOD, M.P., Chancellor of the Exchequer (Items 6 and 7).
The Right Hon. Sir JOHN REITH, M.P., Minister of Transport (Items 6 and 7).

General Sir JOHN DILL, Chief of the Imperial General Staff.

Secretariat.

Sir EDWARD BRIDGES.

Mr. W. D. WILKINSON.
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1. The Prime Minister suggested that, if a red warning was in operation when a Meeting of the War Cabinet was about to begin, there should be a standing arrangement that the Meeting should take place in the Cabinet War Room. If a red warning was given after a Meeting had begun at 10 Downing Street, he hoped that they would be able to continue their business without interruption.

The War Cabinet agreed to the standing arrangement proposed by the Prime Minister.

2. The Prime Minister informed the War Cabinet of the arrival of the Valiant, Coventry and Calcutta at Malta. They had transferred their stores during the daylight hours of the 2nd September and had sailed to join the Commander-in-Chief, Mediterranean.

He had in mind to send a further message in a form suitable for publication to General Dobbie, who had ably and gallantly conducted the defence of Malta since Italy's entry into the war.

The War Cabinet approved this suggestion.

3. The War Cabinet had before them a Report by the Chiefs of Staff (W.P. (40) 350) setting out various measures which had been taken for the defence of the Scilly Isles.

The War Cabinet approved the measures taken for the defence of the Scilly Isles on the understanding that consideration would be given at an early date to the replacement of one (or both) of the independent companies by other troops.

4. The Minister of Aircraft Production made a statement about aircraft production and reserves. In order to improve the flow of Hurricanes to Operational Units, he proposed—

(i) That he should be authorised for a limited period not to fit further Hurricanes with special Middle East equipment.

(ii) That he should be authorised to ask communications units of the Royal Air Force to release machines to operational units.

The Prime Minister agreed that the first point should be looked at week by week, but thought that the step proposed should not be taken forthwith. He would take an early opportunity of discussing both points with the Minister and with the Chief of the Air Staff (in the absence of the Secretary of State for Air).

The War Cabinet took note of this statement.

5. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff reported that the Chiefs of Staff had had two meetings with the American Delegation on supply questions.
The Chief of the Imperial General Staff said that military officers who were at present in the United States would give the British Purchasing Commission expert advice on the packing question, and that delays of the kind which had arisen in the past should thus be avoided in the future.

The War Cabinet took note of the above statement.

6. The War Cabinet had before them a Memorandum by the Minister of Transport (W.P. (G.) (40) 228).

The Minister of Transport said that he did not recommend the first of the five alternatives set out in his paper, i.e., standing fast on the terms of the agreement and accepting the Consultative Committee's recommendations for increases in charges. The Minister cited a number of criticisms of the present agreement.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer said that the agreement had been reached with difficulty. Agreement or no agreement, it was difficult to see how the railways could be given materially less than the meagre profit which they were in fact now showing. He was strongly opposed to the difficulty being met by the easy expedient of an Exchequer subsidy. If the railways were to get a subsidy, there were plenty of other undertakings which would also claim a subsidy.

The following further points were made in discussion:

Should the agreement with the railway companies be modified?

1. The agreement was based on three relatively good years, 1935/36/37, and ignored 1938, a bad year.

2. In peace there had been no reason to suppose that the railways as a whole would earn a dividend on their ordinary capital. Why should they be allowed larger profits because of the increased traffic resulting from the war?

3. The agreement had, however, only been reached in February and had been accepted by implication, although after strong criticism by the House of Commons.

4. It was generally agreed that the terms of the agreement should be modified, but by negotiation.

Should charges be increased?

5. The essence of the problem was how to meet increased costs due to the war.

6. Railway charges had increased by 10 per cent. some months ago, and a further increase of 7½ per cent. was now in prospect. This increase was moderate in comparison with the rise in the price of other commodities.

7. Even if the present difficulty could be got round, further increases in railway costs must be expected later. How were these to be met, if not by increased charges?

8. Many classes had had increases in wages and could well afford higher railway fares.

9. On the other hand, an increase in passenger fares would give rise to political difficulties. While some classes could afford increased fares, others could not, particularly those who, owing to war conditions, were living at a greater distance from their work or wished to visit evacuated families.

10. If the increase was put on to freights, this would result in a further rise in the cost of commodities and would intensify the vicious spiral.
Government preferential rates.

(11) This led to some discussion on Government preferential rates. It was argued that, if passenger fares were now put up, the public would hold that they were paying for a concealed subsidy to the Exchequer.

(12) It was suggested that the preferential rates obtained by the Government represented an undue advantage, which the Government had obtained by reason of the fact that so large a proportion of the business of the country was now Government business. It was further suggested that there might be a case for considering whether the preferential margin, if it represented more than a fair commercial margin, should not be reduced. But there could be no question of depriving members of the Fighting Services of the privileges in respect of journeys at reduced rates to which they were at present entitled.

(13) The Chancellor of the Exchequer said that the point in regard to Government preferential rates had not previously been raised, and he must reserve his position in regard to it.

Nationalisation.

(14) It was suggested that under the present arrangements the railways were treated from some points of view as public, and other points of view as private, undertakings, and that more logical and defensible arrangements would result if the Government was to buy out the railway shareholders and be responsible for running all forms of transport.

(15) The Prime Minister recalled the experiences of railway administration after the last war, and thought that it would be a misfortune if the issue of nationalisation were raised at the present time.

General.

(16) The Prime Minister said that, in his view, the objects to be aimed at should be—

(i) That the terms of the agreement should be revised, so as to limit the railways net profits to the pre-war average.

(ii) That there should be no increase in charges.

He asked to what extent the proposed limitation of net profits would meet the increased charges. The Minister of Transport said that at the present time the railways were making a net profit of some £2 or £3 millions over the pre-war average. There was thus a considerable gap between any saving which could be effected on the railway profits and the increased costs due to war conditions.

After further discussion, the War Cabinet—

Invited the Minister of Transport to initiate discussions with the railway companies for a revision of the terms of the agreement in the light of the discussion in the War Cabinet.

The Minister was instructed to aim at—

(1) a limitation of net pool profits to the pre-war average of £40 millions;

(2) the avoidance of any general increase in railway charges, particularly in railway fares.

The Minister was invited to take into consideration, in consultation with the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the
question whether there was a case for reducing the preferential margin of the Government traffic, subject to no interference with the facilities for travel at reduced rates at present accorded to members of the armed forces. The Minister was invited to report the progress of the negotiations to the War Cabinet before concluding an agreement.

Air Raids. Compensation for damage. (Previous Reference: W.M. (40) 238th Conclusions, Minute 5.)

7. A short preliminary discussion took place about the proposal that compensation up to, say, £2,000, should be granted to persons who had lost their household effects or the stock-in-trade of their businesses in air raids. Up to the beginning of August about 8,000 houses had been hit, of which very few had been totally destroyed. The local authorities were doing admirable work in arranging for the repair of damaged, as opposed to destroyed, houses. This was far less than the forecasts of damage made before the war. From this point of view the problem was of manageable dimensions.

On the other hand it was by no means certain that a scheme which was limited to damage resulting from air raids, and excluded other forms of distress due to the war (for example businesses in evacuated areas) would meet with general support from all political parties. There was the further consideration that it would be difficult to finance the compensation by a flat rate levy on the value of all property, if the compensation payable was limited in all cases to, say, £2,000.

The discussion was adjourned.

Richmond Terrace, S.W. 1,

September 3, 1940.
CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10 Downing Street, S.W. 1, on Wednesday, September 4, 1940, at 11 A.M.

Present:

The Right Hon. Winston S. Churchill, M.P., Prime Minister (in the Chair).
The Right Hon. A. Greenwood, M.P., Minister without Portfolio.
The Right Hon. Viscount Halifax, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.
The Right Hon. Lord Beaverbrook, Minister of Aircraft Production.

The following were also present:
The Right Hon. L. C. M. S. Amery, M.P., Secretary of State for India and Burma (Items 1-5).
The Right Hon. R. S. Hudson, M.P., Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries (Item 6).
Sir Horace Seymour, Assistant Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Items 1-4).
The Right Hon. Viscount Caldecote, Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs (Items 1-4).
The Right Hon. Anthony Eden, M.P., Secretary of State for War (Items 6-8).
Mr. Ralph Assheton, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Labour (Item 6).
Air Marshal R. E. C. Peirse, Vice-Chief of the Air Staff (Item 5).

Secretariat.

Sir Edward Bridges.
Mr. W. D. Wilkinson.
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French Colonies.

1. The attention of the War Cabinet was drawn to a report that Martinique was moving in an anti-Vichy direction, and that a plebiscite was likely to be held in the island.

The War Cabinet—

Invited the Foreign Secretary to consider whether United States influence could be brought to bear against the Vichy elements at Martinique and to instruct Lord Lothian to take any steps in his power.

2. The Prime Minister informed the War Cabinet that the Air Ministry had temporarily stopped the export of Hurricanes overseas. It was hoped that this measure would not be in force for long.

The Minister for Aircraft Production asked whether he could now be given authority not to fit further Hurricanes with special Middle East equipment.

The Prime Minister thought that this measure would be premature. The position was constantly under review.

The War Cabinet took note of the above statements.

3. The Minister of Aircraft Production reported that on Saturday, the 31st August, 700 men had left Castle Bromwich factory at lunch time without authorisation, and a further 700 at 5 P.M.; 3,500 men had remained at work over the week-end, but there was a marked disinclination on the part of the men to continue at work after an air raid warning had been sounded. Production had already fallen off and prompt action was necessary if the situation was not to deteriorate further. He would like to see the sounding of the sirens discontinued.

In discussion, the following points were made:

(1) It was generally agreed that the operation of the air raid warning system ought to be modified. The existing system had been framed to meet the contingency of air raids which would create very great destruction, and was not suitable for the sort of conditions now being experienced.

The Prime Minister referred to the suggestions outlined at the Cabinet two days earlier for modifying the warning system in regard to which discussions were proceeding.

(2) For a year it had been impressed on workers that it was their duty to take cover when the sirens sounded. The habit had become ingrained, and a new outlook was wanted.

(3) The Government had ample legal powers to compel men to remain at work. But it would be a grave decision to apply compulsion to skilled workers in the aircraft industry.

(4) A more suitable method would be the withdrawal of protection from service with the forces. But, before consideration was given to this or any other method, a full report should be obtained as to the local conditions in this factory, and the Minister of Labour should be consulted.
(5) It would be difficult to keep secret any measures found necessary to induce munition workers to continue at work; and there was a risk of affording encouragement to the enemy. The first step might well be that the men should be addressed by some national figure, who could bring them to a better realisation of the position.

The War Cabinet——

Invited the Lord Privy Seal to investigate these matters, in consultation with the other Ministers concerned, in the course of the day, and to report to a Meeting of the War Cabinet to be held at 9·30 p.m. that evening.

The Far East.

The Burma Road.

(Previous Reference: W.M. (40) 399th Conclusions, Minute 9.)

4. The War Cabinet had before them a Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (W.P. (40) 348) about the Burma Road Agreement. What was to happen after the 17th October, when His Majesty's Government could either continue or discontinue the present partial closure of this route?

The Foreign Secretary said that the factor most likely to influence the Far Eastern situation in our favour before the 17th October would be the successful termination of the Battle of Britain. In the meantime we ought so to handle the situation as to leave ourselves free to reopen the road, if we should decide to do so. To this end we should decline to allow the Japanese to extend the scope of the existing agreement, and should emphasise its temporary nature, and the fact that it involved the fulfilment of an obligation on the part of Japan.

In discussion the following points were made:—

(1) The Burma Road situation had been overtaken by the Indo-China situation, on which the facts were far from clear. The Japanese Foreign Office had denied a report that they had presented an ultimatum on the 1st September, demanding the right to send their troops through Indo-China.

(2) If Japan attempted a military occupation of Indo-China, this brought Burma under air threat from Japanese forces.

(3) Could the United States be persuaded to take any action? A great moral effect would be produced on the Japanese if President Roosevelt were to send one American Cruiser Squadron to Singapore, on a ceremonial visit.

(4) Would aggression against Indo-China make Japan stronger or weaker in the military and economic spheres? If the French Government of Indo-China and the local population put up a good resistance, the Japanese might become considerably involved, and pro tanto discouraged from further adventure. A Report was required on this point from the Chiefs of Staff.

(5) The Foreign Secretary said that he had instructed his Department to consider, in consultation with the other Departments concerned, whether we could offer any economic inducements to Japan which would prove so attractive as to keep her on the paths of virtue.

(6) The Prime Minister said that, if the present air battle went in our favour, it would greatly increase our prestige. But it would not materially affect the military position vis-à-vis Japan. A war with Japan would fundamentally affect our strategy in the Middle East. The right course was to go some way in offering inducements
to Japan, and possibly also to go some way in using threats, but not to commit ourselves irrevocably to forcible action.

The War Cabinet—

(a) Invited the Foreign Secretary to sound the United States Government about the possibility of their sending a Cruiser Squadron to Singapore, on a ceremonial visit.

(b) Invited the Chiefs of Staff to report to what extent an extension of the Far Eastern hostilities to Indo-China would be likely to cause military or economic embarrassment to Japan, on the assumption that effective resistance was offered by the Government and population of Indo-China, aided perhaps by the Chinese.

5. The War Cabinet had before them Memoranda by the Secretary of State for India and the Minister without Portfolio (W.P. (G.) (40) 219 and 231) in regard to a scheme for the manufacture of aircraft in India.

The following points were made in discussion:

(1) The Secretary of State for India said that the scheme would make no immediate demands for aero-engines. Sixty Fighter engines would be required, beginning next April, and 60 Bomber engines beginning towards the end of 1941. If need be, these dates could be postponed. It was, however, important that authority should be given which would enable orders to be placed and the scheme to go forward.

(2) On a long term view it would be strategically advantageous to have a factory in India for the manufacture of aircraft. The scheme was also valuable as extending the existing facilities for the repair of aircraft in India.

(3) The scheme was strongly urged by the Viceroy.

(4) The Minister of Aircraft Production said that the output of completed aircraft was conditioned by the engines available. We had contracted for every available engine which could be obtained in America. If the scheme went through it would mean that engines would not be available for a number of air frames which had been ordered, and which would be wasted.

(5) Demands for aero-engines were being made by all the Dominions. He would be greatly handicapped in refusing these demands if the present scheme was approved.

(6) The Vice-Chief of the Air Staff said that on a long term basis the scheme had attractions, but on a short term view seemed unlikely to be worth while.

(7) The Prime Minister said that Germany was no doubt planning to organise aircraft production in all the enslaved countries of Europe. We must be prepared to meet aircraft production on a European scale. We could only do this if we used the most efficient centres of production and we must not dissipate our resources.

(8) While the present air battle continued, we must direct all our energies to making ourselves as strong as possible; but if matters developed favourably for us, it might be possible to reconsider long term projects of this nature.
The War Cabinet—

(i) Withheld approval from the scheme proposed by the Secretary of State for India in his Memorandum of the 21st August (W.P. (G.) (40) 219).

(ii) Agreed that further consideration might be given to this scheme in, say, two months' time.

Harvest Work. 6. The War Cabinet had before them two Memoranda by the Secretary of State for War (W.P. (G.) (40) 323 and H.P.C. (40) 278) about employing troops in harvesting.

Should the troops so employed be paid extra? The Secretary of State for War said that, while troops who had volunteered for harvesting last year had been paid a shilling a day extra, it was not thought suitable that the men would this year be detailed for harvesting should be paid.

The Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Labour, said that from the Ministry of Labour's point of view it would be desirable that they should receive some extra pay.

The general view of the Cabinet was that they should not be paid, but should be given free beer by the farmers. The Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries explained that arrangements would be made for the cost of the beer to be deducted by the farmers from the sum paid by them to the Army authorities in respect of the men's labour.

The Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries explained that at the moment it was only proposed to use soldiers for hop-picking. It might be necessary to use them later for the potato and sugar-beet crop. 20,000 hop-pickers were required at once. It seemed unlikely that the full requirements could be met by the employment of soldiers. Many of the hop-fields were in prohibited area, and the Regional Commissioner had not allowed hop-pickers from London to take their children with them. As a result, many had returned to London. The War Cabinet thought that, in the circumstances, the ban on children accompanying hop-pickers should be removed.

The War Cabinet:—

(1) Approved the policy of employing troops on harvest work. Soldiers detailed for this work should receive their army pay without additional arrangements being made for them to get free beer.

(2) Invited the Home Secretary to instruct the Regional Commissioner for South-East England that children should be allowed to accompany hop-pickers.

The Colonies. 7. The Lord Privy Seal said that Lord Winterton had proposed that there should be a Debate in the House of Commons on the extent of the war effort of the Colonies. The view of the Colonial Secretary, with which he agreed, was that such a Debate at the present time would be undesirable and would raise awkward issues, including questions affecting Palestine.

The Prime Minister agreed with this view. If a debate were insisted on, however, he favoured a statement in general terms that the war effort of the Colonies greatly exceeded the effort which they had made in the late war.
The War Cabinet agreed:

That it was undesirable to have a debate in Parliament at the present time on the Colonies war effort, and that the Lord Privy Seal should therefore ask that the debate should be postponed.

The Balkans.

8. The Foreign Secretary read to the War Cabinet an extract from the draft of a statement which he proposed to make in the House of Lords on the 5th September in regard to the recent territorial changes in Roumania. The draft statement was to the effect that His Majesty's Government favoured modifications of the status quo, provided always that such modifications were just and equitable in themselves, and were reached by means of free and peaceful negotiation and agreement between the interested parties and not by methods of aggression or compulsion. It followed that they were unable to accept the settlement of the Hungarian-Roumanian dispute over Transylvania which had recently been announced. It was not their intention to recognise during the war territorial changes which had evidently not been freely agreed between all the parties concerned, but it was their hope that at the end of the war there might be a general settlement on lines so just and equitable that it would be assured of durability, and they would be prepared to use all their influence to this end.

The War Cabinet approved a statement on these lines.

Richmond Terrace, S.W. 1,
September 4, 1940.
WAR CABINET 242 (40).

CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held in the Cabinet War Room, on Wednesday, September 4, 1940, at 10:20 P.M.

Present:

The Right Hon. WINSTON S. CHURCHILL, M.P., Prime Minister (in the Chair).
The Right Hon. A. GREENWOOD, M.P., Minister without Portfolio.

The following were also present:
The Right Hon. HERBERT MORRISON, M.P., Minister of Supply.
Mr. RALPH ASSHETON, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Labour.

Secretariat.

Sir EDWARD BRIDGES.
Major-General Sir HASTINGS ISMAY.
Mr. W. D. Wilkinson.

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THE War Cabinet had before them the Conclusions of an Informal Meeting held that afternoon under the Chairmanship of the Lord Privy Seal (W.P. (40) 357). The principal recommendation of the Meeting was that an authoritative statement should be made to the effect that everybody engaged on useful work, and not in a position of special danger, should continue his or her work on receipt of the “red” warning, and should not seek shelter until specific instructions were received (or until guns or bombs were heard).

There was general agreement with the view that the present system should be changed, but considerable discussion took place as to the extent of the change to be made immediately, and, in particular, on the question whether the “red” warning should be retained for the present.

The Minister of Aircraft Production said that, under the recommendations put forward by the Informal Meeting, the sirens would continue to disturb production, which would show no improvement. He wished to see the “red” warning abolished at once. His own workers had had no value out of the system. With one exception there had been no warning before any of the bombing attacks on aircraft factories which had resulted in serious damage.

The Prime Minister pointed out that the “red” warning meant only that enemy aircraft were flying over a certain area. No one could tell whether the enemy aircraft intended to bomb that area or were on passage to some other place. Accordingly the “red” warning bore no relation to the danger involved. He was sure that the people of this country would follow any clear and reasonable direction. The public would feel that there was an inherent contradiction between the continued sounding of the “red” warning on the siren, which was associated with the official Government advice to take cover, and the directions that workers worth their salt should no longer obey these instructions but stay at work.

In reply to this, it was pointed out that there were two separate problems: the workers in factories, who were equivalent to troops in the front line, and the rest of the people in the country. It was argued that there was no inconsistency in giving the “red” warning, which applied to the people of the country generally, and an instruction to the workers that their duty to continue production over-ruled the duty to take cover unless danger was imminent.

A number of Members of the War Cabinet thought that the abolition of the “red” warning could only come about gradually. To abolish it immediately might have bad effects on production. There should, however, be a general encouragement to munition workers to keep at work until the last possible moment, and to come back to it as soon as the danger was over and make up for lost time. The public must be educated to understand that the more we were attacked, the more important it was to increase production.

The Home Secretary reminded the War Cabinet that on the 2nd July he had stated in the House of Commons that it was the considered view of the Government that, in order to defeat any efforts by the enemy to dislocate production in our war industries, workers engaged in war production should be encouraged, so far as their local conditions allowed, to continue at work after a public air raid warning, until it was clear that an enemy attack was actually imminent in their neighbourhood. Subsequent to this statement, there had been a series of Meetings organised by the Minister of Labour to deal with the matter. At first there had been some reluctance to continue at work after the “red” warning. This, however, had now been completely overcome. At the Meeting held the previous day both employers’ and employees’ representatives had given an undertaking that, if the sirens were sounded frequently,
they would organise a system of private observation within industrial establishments and guarantee that the workers would remain at work until the alarm was given through this private system of observation. It was clear that both sides of industry had shown that they were determined to carry on with production, provided that proper provision was made to ensure that the wives and families of workers had time to take cover. All the soundings which he had taken showed that importance was attached to the continuance of the "red" warning.

Both the Home Secretary and the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Labour strongly deprecated any decision being taken or any public announcement made before there had been an opportunity for ample discussion with the representatives of employers and employees.

Another point dealt with in discussion was the importance of sleep for workers whether on day or night shifts.

The Prime Minister thought that everyone should be urged to sleep by day or by night in some place where he could stay put during air raid warnings.

General agreement was expressed with this view, although the Lord Privy Seal pointed out that in certain poorer districts of London it was difficult to give effect to this principle.

The Minister without Portfolio thought that we should move by stages in this matter, and deprecated for the present any punitive action in the case where workers had left their posts. We ought to be able to create a tradition that industry remained at its post, whatever the risks might be. Visits of Ministers to munitions factories might help greatly towards the creation of this tradition; they could be arranged without creating any public apprehension, or giving any encouragement to the enemy.

Air Vice-Marshal Peck thought that the present system of warnings could be greatly improved and made more accurate. He thought it was not the "red" warning system itself, but the action taken on it, which required amendment.

I.—The War Cabinet invited the Prime Minister in his statement in the House of Commons on the 5th September to deal with this matter on the following lines:

(a) He should stress the importance of production not being interfered with by air raid warnings unless an attack was imminent.

(b) He should stress the importance of adequate sleep for workers, whether on day or night shifts.

(c) He should indicate that changes in the present system of air raid warnings were under consideration; that consultations were taking place with interested bodies (in particular, with organisations of employers and workpeople); and that a further announcement on the subject would be made in a few days' time.

(d) He might also remove the misapprehension that work came to a standstill in Government offices when the "red" warning was given, and explain that instructions were being given that work should continue.

II.—The War Cabinet agreed that the aim should be to modify the present system on the following lines:

(a) The present audible warning given on the sirens at the beginning of the "red" warning period
should be discontinued. This signal should either be abolished altogether, or kept in reserve for use should conditions change.

(b) In its place an "alert" would be notified by visible signals, e.g., flags by day and electric lights on the street corners by night. This "alert" signal should not interrupt the normal life of the area; but those not engaged on national work could take refuge or put their children in a place of safety.

(c) On the "alert," look-out men would take post at each factory. These men should be given special training in their duties and, if possible, should be provided with apparatus to enable them to detect approaching enemy aircraft.

(d) When the approach of enemy aircraft was detected, or air fighting was in progress in the neighbourhood, the alarm would be sounded by look-out men at the factories and by air raid wardens or policemen in the streets. It would then be everyone's duty to take cover.

(e) The "all-clear" would be sounded to end the alarm period. This might or might not coincide with the end of the "alert."

III.—The War Cabinet agreed that, while it was desirable to work to a system on these lines as soon as possible, it was most important not to announce any change of policy until the appropriate organisations had been consulted, and, in particular, organisations of employers and workpeople.

The Home Secretary and the Minister of Labour were invited to put before the appropriate organisations the outline of a scheme on the above lines, as representing a change in policy which the Government thought should be introduced at the earliest opportunity.

IV.—The War Cabinet invited the Supply Ministers, in consultation with the Home Secretary and the Secretary of State for Air, to take steps to organise a system of look-out men in factories, beginning with those of primary importance from the point of view of munitions production.

V.—The War Cabinet invited the Lord Privy Seal to approach the Speaker with a view to modifying forthwith the present arrangements whereby the House of Commons would adjourn on the "red" warning being sounded.

*Richmond Terrace, S.W. 1,*  
*September 5, 1940.*
TO BE KEPT UNDER LOCK AND KEY.

It is requested that special care may be taken to ensure the secrecy of this document.

WAR CABINET 243 (40).

CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10, Downing Street, S.W. 1, on Thursday, September 5, 1940, at 1 P.M.

Present:
The Right Hon. W. S. CHURCHILL, M.P., Prime Minister (in the Chair).
The Right Hon. VISCOUNT HALIFAX, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.
The Right Hon. A. GREENWOOD, M.P., Minister without Portfolio.

The following were also present:
The Right Hon. Sir J. ANDERSON, Secretary of State for Home Security.
The Right Hon. A. EDEN, M.P., Secretary of State for War.
The Hon. Sir A. CADOGAN, Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.
Air Marshal Sir R. PEirse, Vice-Chief of the Air Staff.

The Right Hon. VISCOUNT CALDECOTE, Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs.
The Right Hon. A. DUFF COOPER, M.P., Minister of Information.
Admiral of the Fleet Sir DUDLEY FOUNT, First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff.
Lieut. General Sir R. HAINING, Vice-Chief of the Imperial General Staff.

Secretariat:
Sir E. BRIDGES.
Major-General Sir H. ISMAY.
Mr. W. D. WILKINSON.

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[21733]
The Prime Minister read to the War Cabinet the main passages of the statement he was proposing to make in Parliament that afternoon.

The Prime Minister said that he proposed to deal with the question of air raid warnings very generally in order to prepare the way for changes, but not to indicate their nature. The changes would be discussed forthwith with the representatives of the organisations concerned, and an announcement made in the ensuing week.

The Minister of Labour had been informed of the discussion in the War Cabinet the previous night, and had expressed very strongly the view that time should be given to allow of further discussions with interested bodies before decisions were taken or announced on the new plans to be adopted.

Subject to amendments on one or two points, the War Cabinet approved the lines of the statement proposed.

The Prime Minister said that, at the meeting of the War Cabinet the previous evening, it had been contemplated that a further announcement should be made that Parliament would not adjourn when the "red" warning was sounded. On reflection he thought that to make such an announcement would be asking for trouble. He suggested that arrangement should be made whereby if a "red" warning sounded while the House was sitting he (or in his absence the Lord Privy Seal) would propose that the House should continue to sit, if that was the general sense of the House, until a further warning was received that an attack was imminent.

This further warning would be received either by a message from the Fighter Command which would be passed to the Prime Minister’s Private Secretary or from watchers specially posted by the authorities of the Houses.

This arrangement met with general approval.

The Prime Minister read out the draft passage in his speech dealing with compensation for damage resulting from air raids which had been settled in consultation with the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He intended to bring out the point that of some 12 million houses in this country only some 8,000 had been hit, of which very few had been totally destroyed. This was a far smaller percentage than that estimated before the war. The Treasury were prepared to review the decisions as to compensation for air raid damage which had been taken at the beginning of the war, more particularly in so far as those decisions affected small householders, providing that investigation showed that this class of case could be dealt with in isolation from other war losses.

The War Cabinet took note with approval of this suggestion.

The Prime Minister indicated briefly the line he proposed to take on a number of other topics. He proposed to announce the work being carried out by the Committee on Lighting Restrictions. He did not, however, propose to make any reference on this occasion to the question of aliens.

Richmond Terrace, S.W. 1,
September 5, 1940.
CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10 Downing Street, S.W. 1, on Friday, September 6, 1940, at 11-30 A.M.

Present:

The Right Hon. WinstoN s. Churchill, M.P., Prime Minister (in the Chair).
The Right Hon. C. R. AtTiLe, M.P., Lord Privy Seal.
The Right Hon. A. gReEnwood, M.P., Minister without Portfolio.
The Right Hon. Viscount Halifax, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.
The Right Hon. Lord Beaverbrook, Minister of Aircraft Production.

The following were also present:

The Right Hon. Anthony Eden, M.P., Secretary of State for War (Items 5 and 6).
The Right Hon. Herbert Morrison, M.P., Minister of Supply (Items 5 and 6).
General Sir John Dill, Chief of the Imperial General Staff (Items 5 and 6).
Air Marshal Sir Richard Peirse, Vice-Chief of the Air Staff (Items 1-5).

Secretariat.

Sir Edward Bridges.
Mr. W. D. Wilkinson.
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1. The War Cabinet had before them the following documents:—

(1) Memorandum by the Minister of Aircraft Production in which the War Cabinet was invited to choose between two schemes to produce 3,000 and 1,250 aircraft a month respectively (W.P. (40) 354).

(2) Memorandum by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, explaining the financial implications of the Minister of Aircraft Production’s proposals (W.P. (40) 355).

A record of the discussion is contained in the Secretary’s Standard File of War Cabinet Conclusions.

The War Cabinet—

(a) Authorised the Minister of Aircraft Production to do his best to obtain capacity in the United States producing 3,000 aircraft per month.

(b) Agreed that the scheme should be reviewed when the first heavy dollar payments became due.

(c) Invited the Minister of Aircraft Production and the Chancellor of the Exchequer to keep the finance of the scheme under constant observation, and in particular to take all practicable steps to persuade the United States Reconstruction Finance Corporation to put up the capital expenditure.

(d) Took note that every endeavour would be made to persuade the United States authorities to adopt our types, but that this might not be consistent with the United States Reconstruction Finance Corporation bearing the capital expenditure involved.

2. The War Cabinet—

Invited the Prime Minister to consider recommending His Majesty to grant honours and decorations in connection with civilian war work, including the work of the management and staffs of munitions and aircraft factories and the services of A.R.P. workers of all kinds.

3. The War Cabinet—

Agreed that consideration should be given to the question whether His Majesty should now be advised to extend the Royal Messages of Condolence to cover the relatives of all persons killed by enemy action.

4. The War Cabinet—

Took note that the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for War were in consultation as to the desirability of giving a more regular status to the Home Guard.
**WAR CABINET 244 (40).**

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1. The War Cabinet had before them the following documents:—

(1) Memorandum by the Minister of Aircraft Production in which the War Cabinet was invited to choose between two schemes to produce 8,000 and 1,250 aircraft a month respectively (W.P. (40) 354).

(2) Memorandum by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, explaining the financial implications of the Minister of Aircraft Production's proposals (W.P. (40) 355).

A record of the discussion is contained in the Secretary’s Standard File of War Cabinet Conclusions.

The War Cabinet—

(a) Authorised the Minister of Aircraft Production to do his best to obtain capacity in the United States producing 3,000 aircraft per month.

(b) Agreed that the scheme should be reviewed when the first heavy dollar payments became due.

(c) Invited the Minister of Aircraft Production and the Chancellor of the Exchequer to keep the finance of the scheme under constant observation, and in particular to take all practicable steps to persuade the United States Reconstruction Finance Corporation to put up the capital expenditure.

(d) Took note that every endeavour would be made to persuade the United States authorities to adopt our types, but that this might not be consistent with the United States Reconstruction Finance Corporation bearing the capital expenditure involved.

2. The War Cabinet—

Invited the Prime Minister to consider recommending His Majesty to grant honours and decorations in connection with civilian war work, including the work of the management and staffs of munitions and aircraft factories and the services of A.R.P. workers of all kinds.

3. The War Cabinet—

Agreed that consideration should be given to the question whether His Majesty should now be advised to extend the Royal Messages of Condolence to cover the relatives of all persons killed by enemy action.

4. The War Cabinet—

Tried note that the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for War were in consultation as to the desirability of giving a more regular status to the Home Guard.
5. The War Cabinet had before them a Memorandum of the Ministry of Aircraft Production (W.P. (40) 353) asking for a special priority, higher than "Works and Buildings Priority A," for the construction of 50 new airfields for the accommodation of Aircraft Storage Units.

The Minister of Aircraft Production explained that he proposed to construct airfields of a comparatively inexpensive type. They would have no hangars or concrete runways: the aircraft would probably be stored in small garages each taking two aircraft. Many of the new airfields would be in remote parts of this country and in Scotland and in Northern Ireland. He proposed as soon as possible to hand back to the Air Ministry a number of the aerodromes now in use by his Department.

The Minister of Supply pointed out that the grant of the special priority desired by the Minister of Aircraft Production would necessarily operate to some extent to defer the completion of other essential works, for example, filling factories.

The Minister of Aircraft Production said that he would gladly accept the ruling of the Minister without Portfolio on the priority of any item as to which there was a difference of opinion between Departments.

The War Cabinet—
Gave general approval to the proposals in W.P. (40) 353, subject to the Minister without Portfolio determining any difference of opinion between Departments as to the priority to be given to any Works and Buildings Services affected by this decision.

6. The War Cabinet had before them a Memorandum by the Minister without Portfolio (W.P. (G.) (40) 222), setting out a revised plan recommended by the Production Council (the Minister of Aircraft Production dissenting) for giving effect to priority policy.

The Production Council proposed to withdraw the general priority direction given to firms, and to issue decisions as to priorities in future to the Priority Committees, the Departments, the Area Boards and the Raw Material Controls for guidance in dealing with allocations and in framing programmes. Firms would receive any necessary guidance from the Departments, who would base their instructions on the general priority decisions, and would act within their allocations of materials and manufacturing capacity. Difficulties arising in factories working for more than one Department would be resolved by Area Boards as far as possible, or by the Priority Committees.

The Minister without Portfolio said that the Departments concerned had preferred a scheme on the lines proposed to an alternative suggestion made by the Select Committee on National Expenditure in their Tenth Report. He outlined the working of the scheme proposed.

The Minister of Supply said that the stages that should be followed to give effect to priority were as follows:

1. The broad strategic policy should be settled and the priority of arms to give effect thereto.
2. In the light of this priority, Departments should state their requirements of munitions.
3. These munitions should be broken down into the materials required.
The materials required should be compared with the available supply, increased as far as practicable.

On this comparison, an allocation should be made to Departments concerned.

Under the present system, Departments scrambled for available materials and overstated their demands. This was shown by the very large demands which had been made for drop forgings and stampings. These demands had, however, now declined, and it seemed that the difficulties in regard to drop forgings and stampings might be diminished without great difficulty.

Under the present system, all demands for aircraft tended to have priority over all other needs, including, for example, the special types of ammunition required by fighter aircraft. This showed the need for a balanced programme.

The Prime Minister pointed out that in several respects the army programme was not making satisfactory progress. The Minister of Supply clearly thought that satisfactory progress could not be made under the present arrangements. He (the Prime Minister) assumed, however, that the present system was only responsible for difficulties in so far as there were clashes between the needs of Departments. The new procedure proposed would not fundamentally alter the position of factories working wholly for the Ministry of Supply or the Admiralty.

The Prime Minister also referred to the very large demands made for production of army vehicles.

The Secretary of State for War said that only 5 Divisions had their first line transport complete. The army realised that they would have to do with make-shift vehicles for the second line transport, but if make-shift vehicles were used for first line transport, the Divisions so equipped could not operate across country.

The Minister of Aircraft Production asked that the present procedure for giving effect to the priority policy should continue in force for a further fortnight, subject to further consideration thereafter. The aircraft industry was going through a very difficult time and he was anxious that they should not be disturbed in any way by a change of procedure at this critical juncture.

In reply to a suggestion that it would take a fortnight to give effect to the new procedure now proposed, the Minister said that, if the Cabinet decided in principle to change the present system, this decision would become known and the firms in the aircraft industry would be disturbed. The Minister added that, under the system proposed, powers exercised in regard to priority would be taken away from his Ministry and vested in a Committee. This would destroy the effective control exercised by his Department.

The President of the Board of Trade agreed that priority questions arose only at the particular points where the programmes overlapped. The new procedure proposed would, however, show more clearly where these overlaps occurred, and would limit their disturbing effects. At the present time there was considerable confusion, and the export trade suffered more than would be necessary if matters were conducted in a more orderly way. The present general priority direction had only been intended to cover a period of three months, and was not suitable for a long-term programme.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Labour said that the essence of any satisfactory scheme was to secure co-operation between Departments. The only system of priority which would work satisfactorily was a system based on allocation. At the present time the Minister of Labour was at a loss to know what instructions to give to employment exchanges. He ought to be in
a position to know whether firms were entitled to the priority which they claimed. This could not be done under the present system. There was the further point that changes in the priority direction could be more easily made if the priority direction had not been broadcast to a large number of firms.

The First Lord of the Admiralty said that the Admiralty favoured the adoption of a scheme on the lines proposed in the Memorandum by the Minister without Portfolio. At the present time, the Admiralty thought that some of the capacity for forgings, &c., which had been laid down on their initiative, and which they had now given up to other Departments, was not being used to meet the immediate needs of those Departments.

The Prime Minister said that he assumed that the Minister of Aircraft Production could not claim that the existing priority afforded to aircraft was meant to be an unlimited and indefinite priority. He thought it was important to define the programmes to which priorities should extend.

The Minister of Aircraft Production agreed. The aircraft programme was, in fact, limited by the possibilities of aero-engine production. He had submitted a programme showing the aircraft to be produced month by month. He hoped that his Department would be able to achieve the figures there set out, but saw no possibility of exceeding them.

The Minister without Portfolio said that he could not accept the Minister of Aircraft Production's view that the scheme now proposed would vest the exercise of priority powers in a Committee. He thought it was very important that Departments should know what would be left for them when the essential needs of aircraft had been met.

The Minister of Aircraft Production said that, provided the existing system could remain unchanged, he would submit particulars of his Department's requirements of steel of all types for the ensuing three months.

The Prime Minister thought that, while the discussion had been helpful towards elucidating the problem, a final decision could not be reached that morning. He would like rather longer to consider the matter. He therefore proposed that the Minister of Aircraft Production's suggestion that he should submit the particulars of his requirements of steel under various heads within the next three months should be accepted, and that discussion as to the procedure of priority should be adjourned for a fortnight.

The War Cabinet approved this suggestion.

Richmond Terrace, S.W. 1.
September 6, 1940.
CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the War Cabinet, held at 10 Downing Street, S.W. 1, on Monday, September 9, 1940, at 12.30 P.M.

Present:

The Right Hon. Winston S. Churchill, M.P., Prime Minister (in the Chair).

The Right Hon. Viscount Halifax, M.P., Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

The Right Hon. A. Greenwood, M.P., Minister without Portfolio.

The Right Hon. Lord Beaverbrook, Minister of Aircraft Production.

The following were also present:


The Right Hon. Anthony Eden, M.P., Secretary of State for War.

The Right Hon. Malcolm MacDonald, M.P., Minister of Health (Item 7).

The Hon. Sir Alexander Cadogan, Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Items 1-6).

Air Chief Marshal Sir Cyril L. N. Newall, Chief of the Air Staff.


The Right Hon. Sir Archibald Sinclair, Bt., M.P., Secretary of State for Air.

The Right Hon. A. Duff Cooper, M.P., Minister of Information.

Sir Findlater Stewart, Chief Civil Staff Officer to the Commander-in-Chief, Home Forces (Item 7). Admiral of the Fleet Sir Dudley Pound, First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff.

General Sir John Dill, Chief of the Imperial General Staff.

Secretariat.

Sir Edward Bridges.

Major-General Sir Hastings Ismay.

Mr. L. F. Burgis.
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1. The Chief of the Air Staff reported that during the previous day enemy air activity had been on a considerably reduced scale, and the casualties had been:—

Our own—

4 machines (2 pilots saved).

Enemy—

7 destroyed.
3 probable.
8 damaged.

The air attack on the previous evening had started before dark and had continued until 5 o'clock that morning. Practically the whole of the enemy effort had been devoted to an attack on London, with acute concentration on the dock area, railways and power stations. Reports showed, however, that, while considerable damage had been done, the intense bombing had had comparatively little effect on undertakings engaged on war production.

The operations of the Bomber Command on the previous night had been mainly directed against enemy shipping, and from these operations 5 medium and 4 heavy bombers were missing.

The Minister of Home Security reported that the main damage caused by the air raid on the previous evening had been suffered by railways, power stations and the dock area. A number of hospitals had been hit, but most of the damage to utility services would be quickly repaired, and all fires were under control. In spite of the previous night’s air raid, it was considered that the situation at 8 o'clock that morning as regards fires was better than twenty-four hours previously. A tribute was paid to the efficiency of the fire brigade services, and Sir John Anderson said that by that evening, in spite of the heavy demand made on the personnel and plant, it would again be 100 per cent. efficient.

The Minister of Aircraft Production said that the effect on aircraft production of the raids of the two previous nights had been very slight.

The First Sea Lord reported that on the previous night H.M.S. Galatea and Aurora, each with three destroyers, had bombarded Calais and Boulogne. Bad visibility had impeded this operation. M.T.B.s had damaged two ships, one of 2,000 tons and one of 1,000 tons, off Ostend.

German Naval wireless activity had been intensive.

The Prime Minister emphasised the importance of attacking ports such as Calais and Boulogne. Such attacks would affect the morale of German troops assembled ready to invade this country.

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff reported that there had been a certain amount of activity on the Libyan Border, where our tanks had engaged the enemy, who had retired.

In the Sudan there had been activity amongst patrols, but the rains still continued, and it was improbable that the enemy would attempt any large-scale attack in this neighbourhood before October.

The War Cabinet took note of the above statements.
2. The Prime Minister said that, after the heavy air attacks of the week-end, he thought it would be wise to feel our way for a few days before making any changes in the air-raid warning system. In the meantime, the practice should be continued of sounding the sirens on the red warning for half the period previously adopted.

The Home Secretary agreed, but hoped that the watchman system would be developed to the fullest extent. Both employers and employees were anxious to see this done.

The Prime Minister said that, on further consideration, he thought it was unwise that Parliament should meet on fixed dates and at fixed times publicly announced. The present arrangement was that the House of Commons should reassemble on Tuesday, the 17th September. He thought that the right plan would be that the House should reassemble on Monday, the 16th, but that this change of plan should be kept secret until the House had met. Thereafter the procedure should be that the House should adjourn to a day not later than a fixed date. No public announcement would be made in advance of the time or date on which the House would meet. Similar arrangements would apply to the House of Lords. The Prime Minister added that, in his view, it was important that Members of Parliament should spend as much time as possible in their constituencies.

The War Cabinet—
(1) Agreed that steps should be taken to bring about the fullest use of the watchman system, but that no further modifications should be made at present in the air-raid warning system.
(2) Approved generally the suggestions made by the Prime Minister in regard to meetings of Parliament.

3. The War Cabinet were reminded that at their Meeting held on Wednesday, the 4th September, arrangements had been approved for the employment of troops on harvest work, the immediate object being the employment of troops for hop-picking. In present circumstances, troops could not be spared for this work.

At the same Meeting, the Home Secretary had been invited to instruct the Regional Commissioner for South-East England that children should be allowed to accompany hop-pickers. Having regard to the bombing of London in the last two days, there should now be less difficulty in getting children to leave East and South London for the Kentish hopfields, to replace troops who could not be spared.

The War Cabinet—
Invited the Minister of Labour and the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries to take steps, in consultation, to arrange for children from London to help pick hops in Kent.

4. The War Cabinet were informed that there had been some difficulty in getting 1,300 men to carry out an important smoke experiment. All available troops were required for defence duties, but the Home Guard had been unwilling to undertake the work.
The U.S.S.R.

Attitude to be adopted towards Soviet absorption of the Baltic States.
(Previous Reference: W.M. (40) 225th Conclusions, Minute 2.)

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs reminded the War Cabinet that he had been invited to ascertain how the United States Government would view a suggestion that the gold of the Baltic States Banks should be released to the U.S.S.R. in exchange for adequate compensation for the interests of our nationals.

The conversation which the Commercial Counsellor at Washington had had with Mr. Atherton showed (Telegram No. 1926 from Washington) that any deal on these lines would meet with serious opposition in the United States. Clearly the goodwill of the United States was of far more value to us than the somewhat illusory benefits of the goodwill of the U.S.S.R. It was therefore impossible to proceed with a deal on the lines previously suggested.

The Foreign Secretary said that he proposed to see M. Maisky and to tell him that on examination the matter involved greater difficulties than we had anticipated, and that a deal on the lines suggested would virtually involve de jure recognition, for which we were not ready. If, however, the U.S.S.R. were prepared to forgo their claim to the gold, we would forgo our claim to compensation for British assets.

If, as seemed likely, the U.S.S.R. refused to agree to a settlement on these lines, he (the Foreign Secretary) would say that the claims of both sides should be put into cold storage, but that this should be no obstacle to better relations between our countries or to a barter deal. The Soviet had in fact made a Trade Agreement with the United States of America.

The War Cabinet authorised the Foreign Secretary to proceed on the lines indicated.

The United States of America.

Supply of destroyers.
(Previous Reference: W.M. (40) 239th Conclusions, Minute 2.)

5. The Secretary of State for War said that, in the light of the decision that troops should not after all help with the hop-picking (see Minute 3), he would be prepared, on the present occasion, to make army recruits available for this particular experiment, to which special importance was attached.

6. The Prime Minister said that the Admiralty had decided to call the destroyers we were receiving from the United States after names of towns common to this country and the United States. This happy suggestion would emphasise the common heritage of the two countries. He asked the Minister of Information to arrange to give publicity to the names selected, as soon as the Admiralty list was available.

Home Defence.

Evacuation of civil population from certain towns.
(Previous Reference: W.M. (40) 192nd Conclusions, Minute 14.)

7. The Secretary of State for the Home Department and Minister of Home Security reminded the War Cabinet that, on the 3rd July, they had agreed that the voluntary evacuation of the civil population should be stimulated from the nineteen East Coast towns between Great Yarmouth and Folkestone. In the result, the population of these towns had been reduced to about 40 per cent. of the normal.

The Commander-in-Chief, Home Forces, had now reached the conclusion that, in view of the advanced state of the enemy's preparations for invasion, every effort should be made to arrange for the evacuation of all but essential people in the towns along the coast from Ramsgate to Brighton (both inclusive), and also from Ipswich, Colchester, Canterbury and Ashford. If invasion was attempted, he thought that these towns would be subject to intensive bombing. In this event it would be very difficult, if not impossible, to maintain the civil population in these towns.
Meetings of the Civil Ministers concerned had been held, attended by a representative of the Home Forces. The conclusions reached had been that, if the War Cabinet agreed that the threat of invasion in the next two weeks must be regarded as considerable, certain measures should be taken, notwithstanding the serious economic consequences.

The time available did not permit of the adoption of a compulsory evacuation scheme. It would be possible, however, to apply to the towns between New Romney and Newhaven (both inclusive) a scheme for stimulating voluntary evacuation, on the lines previously applied to the coastal towns from Folkestone to Great Yarmouth. It would, however, be an inherent part of this scheme that this evacuation should be regarded as a temporary measure, to meet a risk which was now substantial, but would decline as winter approached. The scheme, like the previous scheme, would apply to non-essential people, to whom it would be represented that it was their duty, as good citizens, to leave the neighbourhood for the time being.

It was not proposed to apply this scheme to Brighton, having regard to the fact that accommodation and transport would not be available for the large number of people concerned. Special arrangements would be made to evacuate the population of Brighton to the West, if this area was directly threatened with invasion.

The Minister of Health said that it was proposed that the inhabitants of the towns affected in Kent and Sussex who agreed to evacuate should be moved via the Redhill–Reading route to the Counties of Berks, Oxon, Wilts and Somers. If approved, the scheme could be carried out in the course of the next three or four days. The total number of persons involved was about 150,000 for the towns on the South Coast, and 60,000 to 80,000 for Ipswich and Colchester.

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff said that, on purely military grounds, the measures advocated were most desirable.

The Prime Minister said that it was essential that, if the scheme was approved, it should be kept out of the Press.

The Home Secretary said that, following the arrangements adopted in regard to the East Coast towns, no mention would be made of this measure of evacuation in the newspapers, but local publicity would be necessary. People in the country districts would not be brought within the scope of the scheme.

The War Cabinet—

Authorised the Minister of Home Security to take steps to stimulate the voluntary evacuation of the non-essential civil population from South Coast towns between New Romney and Newhaven (both inclusive), and from Canterbury, Ashford, Ipswich and Colchester.

This should be carried out as a temporary measure, and no news about it should be allowed to appear in the newspapers.

8. The War Cabinet took note of the Sixth Report by the Chiefs of Staff on the Organisation of Allied Naval, Army and Air Contingents (W.P. (40) 355).

Richmond Terrace, S.W. 1,
September 9, 1940.
CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the War Cabinet, held at 10 Downing Street, S.W. 1, on Tuesday, September 10, 1940, at 12:30 P.M.

Present:

The Right Hon. W. S. Churchill, M.P., Prime Minister (in the Chair for Items 2 to 6).

The Right Hon. Neville Chamberlain, M.P., Lord President of the Council (in the Chair for Item 1).

The Right Hon. Viscount Halifax, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

The Right Hon. Lord Beaverbrook, Minister of Aircraft Production.

The following were also present:


The Right Hon. Sir Archibald Sinclair, Bt., M.P., Secretary of State for Air.

Air Chief Marshal Sir Cyril L. N. Newall, Chief of the Air Staff.

The Right Hon. Anthony Eden, M.P., Secretary of State for War.

The Right Hon. Ernest Brown, M.P., Secretary of State for Scotland (Item 6).

Admiral of the Fleet Sir Dudley Pound, First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff.

General Sir John Dill, Chief of the Imperial General Staff.

Secretariat.

Sir Edward Bridges.

Major-General Sir Hastings Ismay.

Mr. W. D. Wilkinson.
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1. The Chief of the Air Staff reported that during the twenty-four hours ended at 7 A.M. that morning the casualties had been:

**Our own**

- 20 (15 pilots safe).

**Enemy**

- 52 destroyed.
- 11 probable.
- 13 damaged.

On the night 8th–9th September some 200 German aircraft had operated over this country. In the daylight hours of the 9th September some 400 German aircraft had been operating over this country, of which some 300 had taken part in the 5 p.m. raid.

During the whole of the night 9th–10th September enemy aircraft had been active over London. The main attack had been on the City, where several fires had been caused, two of major importance. Bombs had fallen in many other parts of London.

The bombing of London had been quite indiscriminate and the view was expressed that our raiders over Germany ought to be instructed not to return home with their bombs, if they failed to locate the targets which they were detailed to attack.

One hundred and eight of our bombers had been over enemy countries on the night of the 9th–10th September. Medium bombers had attacked the harbours and shipping at Ostend, Calais and Boulogne and two medium bombers had attacked gun emplacements at Cap Gris Nez. Heavy bombers had attacked the Charlottenburg and Neukoln gasworks at Berlin.

The First Sea Lord reported that during the night of the 9th–10th September five destroyers had carried out a sweep of the French Coast from St. Valery north-eastwards towards Le Touquet, in order to locate and destroy enemy small craft. Two destroyers had proceeded towards Calais and three towards Boulogne; M.T.B.s also had carried out a sweep between Ostend and the mouth of the Scheldt. The results of these sweeps had been almost negative, only one small craft having been found out of harbour.

The report that an enemy force consisting of four Cruisers, thirteen Torpedo boats and fifteen small craft had been seen off Ostend steering South-West had proved incorrect. In all probability what had been seen had been a number of sloops and small craft.

Our reconnoitring aircraft had reported that a fair number of vessels of small size were still entering the ports of Flushing, Ostend, Calais and Boulogne.

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff gave particulars of certain movements of the Home Forces.

In the Middle East there was little to record beyond ineffective enemy bombing and a successful raid by one of our patrols from Kenya into Abyssinia.

The War Cabinet—

1. Invited the Secretary of State for Air to give instructions that our bombers operating over Germany should not return with their bombs in the event of their failing to locate their targets.

2. Invited the Minister of Information to arrange with the Press and the B.B.C. for no further statements to be made to the effect that the British aircraft always returned with their bombs if they failed to locate their targets.
2. The War Cabinet were given the latest information bearing on the enemy's preparations for invasion of this country, and in particular as to the movements of shipping. The possibilities of various forms of attack against shipping assembled in Channel ports or passing from one port to another were discussed.

The Prime Minister again emphasised the importance of attacking enemy shipping and troop concentrations.

The Prime Minister also asked the Secretary of State for War for a report on the information obtained from enemy agents captured in this country.

3. The Secretary of State for the Home Department and Minister of Home Security informed the War Cabinet that a difficult situation was arising in regard to persons in the East End of London who had been rendered homeless. This matter had not, perhaps, been very well handled by all the local authorities, but arrangements had now been made for the matter to be taken over by the London County Council. A special organisation was also being set up in Whitehall. It was proposed to transfer the homeless people from the East of London to districts further West. An appeal would be made to householders to find accommodation.

Continuing, the Home Secretary said that the Lord Mayor wanted to start a fund for the relief of distress caused by the bombing of London. It would be difficult to refuse to allow this fund to be started, more especially as the American Ambassador and the Lord Mayor of Melbourne had opened similar funds. It should, however, be made clear that the scheme was intended to supplement the compensation provided by the Government, and would deal with the sort of items of expenditure which could not be covered by the Government's scheme.

The War Cabinet—
Invited the Home Secretary to inform the Lord Mayor of London that no objection was seen to the opening of a fund on these lines.

4. The War Cabinet invited the Lord President of the Council to confer with the Chancellor of the Exchequer in regard to the proposed scheme of compensation for damage resulting from air raids.

5. The Prime Minister said that it was now proposed, subject to further consultation with the Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasury, that Parliament should meet on Monday, the 16th September, at 11 a.m. The time and date of the meeting should not be announced beforehand, and the Press should be told not to publish the time of the meeting even after it had taken place.

6. The War Cabinet approved the revised print of Instructions to the Police in the event of Invasion (W.P. (40) 363) subject to the addition of the word “previously” before the word “issued” in the last line but two of paragraph 4 (b) (ii).

Richmond Terrace, S.W. 1,
September 10, 1940.
13th September, 1940.

Dear Melville,

With reference to the Secretary of State's letter to the Prime Minister of yesterday's date about the Cabinet Conclusion on instructions to our bombers operating over Germany, the Prime Minister has minuted on the telegram which was enclosed:­

"S. of S.
This may stand for the present.

W.S.C.  12.9."

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) PECK.

R.H. Melville, Esq.,
AIR MINISTRY.
COPY.

AIR MINISTRY,
WHITEHALL, S.W.1.
11th September, 1940.

Dear Prime Minister,

In Conclusion 1 (i) of the minutes of yesterday's War Cabinet Meeting I am invited "to give instructions that our bombers operating over Germany should not return with their bombs in the event of their failing to locate their targets".

I find that an instruction had already been issued to Bomber Command that pilots should make every effort to avoid bringing their bombs home and I attach a copy of our signal. It does not, however, go so far as the Cabinet Conclusion in that it permits pilots to bring home their bombs in the last resort if they cannot find any military target. I think it would be unwise to go further than this instruction.

(a) Because our present policy is to bomb only military objectives and this was re-emphasised at this morning's Cabinet.
(b) Because a relaxation of restrictions on bombing indiscriminately might possibly reduce the determination of our pilot's to go for their set targets with a consequent loss in military results, and

(c) because pilot's normally look for their last resort targets in Holland, Belgium or France and if they fail to find them and drop their bombs indiscriminately it would be the Dutch, Belgians and French who would suffer and not the Germans.

I do not propose therefore to issue any further instruction to Bomber Command but I should be glad of your approval.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) ARCHIBALD SINCLAIR.

10, Downing Street, S.W.1.
To: - Bomber Command.
From: - Air Ministry.

Despatched A.M.C.S. 1555 hours 9.9.40.

IMMEDIATE.

X. 394 9/9

In view of the indiscriminate nature of the German bombing attacks, the orders with regard to pilots bringing back their bombs should be relaxed. It is not the intention that pilots should bomb at random or that they should never bring back their bombs, but every attempt should be made to bomb alternative or last resort targets if it is impossible to locate the primary target.

Time of Origin: - 1500 hours/9

Copies to: -
C.A.S.
V.C.A.S.
D.C.A.S. (orig.)
D. of Plans.
D.H.O.
D.N.C.
D.O.O.
D.D. Plans (Ops.)

S. OF S.
This may stand for the present.
(Intld.) W.S.C. 12 IX.
CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the War Cabinet, held at 10 Downing Street, S.W. 1, on Wednesday, September 11, 1940, at 12:30 P.M.

Present:

The Right Hon. WINSTON S. CHURCHILL, M.P., Prime Minister (in the Chair).

The Right Hon. NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN, M.P., Lord President of the Council.


The Right Hon. VISCOUNT HALIFAX, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

The Right Hon. A. GREENWOOD, M.P., Minister without Portfolio.

The Right Hon. LORD BEAVERBROOK, Minister of Aircraft Production.

The following were also present:


The Right Hon. ANTHONY EDEN, M.P., Secretary of State for War.

The Hon. ALEXANDER CADOGAN, Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

Air Chief Marshal Sir CYRIL L. N. NEWALL, Chief of the Air Staff.

Air Chief Marshal Sir CYRIL L. N. NEWALL, Chief of the Air Staff.

Admiral of the Fleet Sir DUDLEY POUND, First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff.

General Sir JOHN DILL, Chief of the Imperial General Staff.

Secretariat.

SIR EDWARD BRIDGES.

Major-General SIR HASTINGS ISMAY.

Mr. L. F. BURGIS.
# WAR CABINET 247 (40).

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Naval, Military
and Air
Operations.
(Previous
Reference:
W.M. (40) 246th
Conclusions,
Minute 1.)

Air Operations.
Air raid damage
to shipping in
the Docks.

1. The Chief of the Air Staff reported that the bombing of
Germany on the night 10th–11th September, had, on the whole, been
successful. Potsdam Station had been attacked and six direct hits
claimed.

The docks at Wilhelmshaven and Bremen had been attacked
and also shipping in the Channel ports.

The First Sea Lord reported that the damage to shipping
during the raids of the last few nights on the London Docks had
not been so considerable as had at first been thought. The tonnage
of ships totally lost was about 29,000. In addition 15,000 tons of
shipping could probably be salvaged on a long-term basis. Ships
totalling 72,000 tons had suffered minor damage. Such an attack
had been anticipated with the result that there was not so much
shipping in the Thames as usual. The Admiralty were taking
further steps to arrange for extra shipping facilities in the North-
West ports.

Discussion followed on a suggestion that we should threaten
Germany with reprisals by bombing any one of twenty German
towns (to be named) if the indiscriminate bombing of London
continued.

The War Cabinet—
Invited the Secretary of State for Air to consider the
question of reprisals at some future date, but agreed that
for the present our bomber force should continue to be used
to attack military targets.

Military
Operations:
Sudan and
Kenya.

2. The War Cabinet—
Invited the Lord President of the Council, the Lord Privy
Seal and the Minister without Portfolio to review the
steps being taken to deal with the damage caused by air
raids in the London area to utility services, transport and
food supplies, and the measures being taken to accommodate
people rendered homeless.

Home Defence.
Measures to
counter a
possible attempt
at invasion.
(Previous
Reference:
W.M. (40) 246th
Conclusions,
Minute 2.)

3. The War Cabinet had a short discussion, which is recorded
in the Secretary’s Standard File of War Cabinet Conclusions, as to
the measures being taken to counter the threat of invasion.
4. The War Cabinet had before them a Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs circulating an exchange of telegrams with His Majesty's Minister in Stockholm, together with a draft reply to telegram No. 1016. (W.P. (40) 366.)

A record of the discussion is contained in the Secretary's Standard File of War Cabinet Conclusions.

The War Cabinet—

1) Approved the despatch of the draft reply prepared by the Foreign Secretary;
2) Authorised the Foreign Secretary to inform President Roosevelt of the sense of the telegrams which had been received, and of the reply sent thereto.

5. The War Cabinet were informed that six French cruisers had left Toulon. A decision was required as to the action to be taken in certain eventualities. A record of the discussion, and of the conclusions reached, is contained in the Secretary's Standard File of War Cabinet Conclusions.

6. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs reported to the War Cabinet that a telegram had been received from Tangier (No. 332) to the effect that General Weygand who had been appointed to North Africa would probably feel sore at his exclusion from the Vichy Government and that his arrival in Morocco had been delayed for a few days owing to an air accident. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs added that a Foreign Office official had talked with a French official recently returned from Morocco, who had given an encouraging account of the position there from our point of view.

The War Cabinet took note of the above statement.

7. The War Cabinet—

Took note of a Report by the Chiefs of Staff (W.P. (40) 364) on the probable effect on Japan of an extension of the Far Eastern hostilities to Indo-China. The general effect of this report was that such an event would not cause Japan any appreciable embarrassment.

Richmond Terrace, S.W. 1,
September 11, 1940.
CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10 Downing Street, S.W. 1, on Thursday, September 12, 1940, at 12.30 P.M.

Present:

The Right Hon. NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN, M.P., Lord President of the Council (in the Chair).


The following were also present:


The Hon. Sir ALEXANDER CADOGAN, Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

Secretariat.

Sir EDWARD BRIDGES.

Mr. W. D. WILKINSON.

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Naval, Military and Air Operations.

(Previous Reference: W.M. (40) 247th
Conclusions, Minute 1.)

Air casualties.

1. The Secretary of State for Air said that the casualties during the period ended 7 A.M. that morning had been:

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By our Fighters:

- By A.A. Fire, unidentified (I.A.Z.) — 8
- (Solent) Bomber — 1
- — 89

Our Losses —

- 28 Aircraft. 17 pilots killed or missing.

A conservative estimate was that the Germans had lost 250 men. The anti-aircraft artillery defences of London were being more than doubled. On the previous night it had been decided to put up a pretty heavy barrage, and about 100 rounds per gun had been fired. As a result of the barrage one-third of the raiders had turned back. It was also noticeable that while enemy aircraft which had penetrated the defences earlier in the night had flown at about 180 miles an hour at a height of 12,000 to 16,000 feet, later in the night they had flown at about 240 miles an hour at about 27,000 feet.

The Home Secretary was most grateful for the increased measure of artillery support. The moral effect on our people had been excellent. The City of London had now escaped serious damage for two nights running.

The Secretary of State for Air said that our bombers had made very successful sorties on the night 10th/11th September. Their attack on the Potsdamer railway station in Berlin had been very effective. On the night of the 11th/12th September an attack had been made on the Anhalter railway station in Berlin. Shipping had also been attacked in the Channel ports and at Bremerhaven, where hits might have been secured on the Europa and the Bremen.

The Coastal Command also had made successful sorties. On one occasion, when six Blenheims and six Albacores had been engaged with three times their number of enemy fighters, three M.E.109's had been shot down and a D.O.18 had been damaged.

The War Cabinet took note of these statements.

2. The War Cabinet took note that the six French Cruisers had passed through the Straits of Gibraltar on the previous day and had proceeded to Casablanca, and that a British force had been ordered to patrol to the southward to prevent these ships from entering Dakar.

3. The Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs drew attention to telegram No. 901 from Berne. This telegram recorded an interview between our Minister and the President of the Swiss Republic, who had read out the text of instructions to the Swiss Minister in London. Clearly we must expect to receive a very stiff protest in the next day or so. Consultations were proceeding between the Foreign Office and the Air Ministry on the following points: first, whether we could undertake not to cross Switzerland in order to get to Southern Germany; secondly, whether our airmen could be instructed that if they had to jettison their bombs, they should do so on Italian rather
than on Swiss territory; thirdly, whether without serious interference with needs, a few nights could now elapse during which our aircraft did not fly over Switzerland. It would be easier to deal with the Swiss protest if there could be a short interval free from further violations.

The Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs said that he understood that Milan could not be reached without crossing Switzerland, but that this might not apply to Turin or Genoa.

The Secretary of State for Air undertook to examine these points and to communicate with Sir Alexander Cadogan.

*Richmond Terrace, S.W. 1,*  
*September 12, 1940.*
CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10 Downing Street, S.W.1, on Friday, September 13, 1940, at 11 A.M.

Present:
The Right Hon. WINSTON S. CHURCHILL, M.P., Prime Minister (in the Chair).
The Right Hon. NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN, M.P., Lord President of the Council.
The Right Hon. A. GREENWOOD, M.P., Minister without Portfolio.

The following were also present:
The Right Hon. ANTHONY EDEN, M.P., Secretary of State for War.
The Right Hon. Sir ANDREW DUNCAN, M.P., President of the Board of Trade (for Items 7 and 8).
The Right Hon. Sir JOHN REITH, M.P., Minister of Transport (for Items 3 and 4).
The Right Hon. A. DUFF COOPER, M.P., Minister of Information.
Air Chief Marshal Sir CYRIL L. N. NEWALL, Chief of the Air Staff.

General Sir JOHN DILL, Chief of the Imperial General Staff.

Secretariat.
Sir EDWARD BRIDGES.
Major-General Sir HASTINGS ISMAY.
Mr. W. D. WILKINSON.
Mr. L. F. BURGIS.
## WAR CABINET 249 (40).

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1. The Chief of the Air Staff said that the enemy casualties during the period ended 7 A.M. that morning had been 3 aircraft destroyed and 4 damaged.
   We had suffered no casualties.

Enemy activity had been on a reduced scale during the past 24 hours—during the night not more than 100 aircraft having been involved. London had again been the principal target, but the damage had been appreciably less than on previous nights. The Midlands had also been bombed, but no serious damage had been reported.

Air operations on a small scale had taken place in Egypt, the Sudan and Eritrea.

A considerable number of casualties were reported from Tel-Aviv as a result of the recent raid. The morale of the population had been good.

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff reported that on the Western Frontier of Egypt the Italians were making their first large-scale move for some considerable time. On the 10th September a force, estimated as the equivalent of one division, had moved eastwards, and one column of about 100 M.T. had halted between Sidi Azziz and Fort Capuzzo, while the main column of about 500 M.T. had halted in an area 8 to 12 miles West of Sidi Omar. These forces had made a further move eastwards on the 11th September. General Wavell was of opinion that a large-scale Italian offensive was not to be expected for a few days more, perhaps not until the 20th September.

The First Sea Lord said that three groups, each of four destroyers, had made sweeps in the channel, but had reported nothing significant.

The First Sea Lord said that, as the War Cabinet had been informed on the previous day, the six French cruisers had entered Casablanca. On the early morning of the previous day H.M. Destroyer Vidette had sighted a French destroyer off Casablanca, steering north-west at 20 knots. After illuminating her by searchlights, Vidette had opened fire, but had ceased fire when the destroyer had signalled her name. No hits had been made and the fire had not been returned.

The Renoivn had clear instructions that the French warships should not be permitted to go to Dakar or Duala. If they attempted to do so, our vessels would use the minimum force necessary to prevent them.

The Prime Minister gave a brief account of his visit to the Dungeness and North Foreland districts on the previous day.

The War Cabinet—
(a) Took note of the above statements.
(b) Invited the Secretary of State for Air to convey to the squadrons of the Coastal Command their admiration of the skill and courage with which the vital, arduous, but often unspectacular, tasks allotted to them had been carried out, and of the enterprise and success with which in recent days they had struck at the harbours, shipping and coastal defences of the enemy.
(c) Invited the Secretary of State for the Colonies to send a suitable message on behalf of His Majesty's Government to the Authorities at Tel-Aviv.
2. A discussion took place on the position in the London area. The following points were made:—

(i) The Minister of Health said that there had been a remarkable improvement in the morale of the people during the preceding 36 hours, largely owing to the heavy anti-aircraft fire.

(ii) This improvement in morale had, however, to some extent impeded the evacuation of the homeless. People who earlier had clamoured to be taken away were now reluctant to leave their homes. Nevertheless, the evacuation arrangements were functioning reasonably well. Large numbers from the East End had been moved into West London boroughs or into Essex.

(iii) The Lord Privy Seal said that he had heard some complaint that the persons rendered homeless were to be billeted, when numbers of houses were empty and could be taken over for the purpose.

(iv) The Minister of Health said that the sewage situation was unsatisfactory. A vital part of the sewage pumping machinery had been damaged and the main sewers broken in several places. As a result, sewage was draining into the River Lea instead of into the Thames. Some anxiety was felt for other districts (for instance, West Ham) where the main sewers ran at a higher level than the ground. If the sewers were broken, these districts would have to be evacuated.

The Minister added that he was very dissatisfied with a report that the damage to the sewage system might take several months to repair. He was looking into the matter personally.

(v) The Silvertown district had been evacuated owing to the water supply being cut off. The supply had been restored, but it was not proposed to allow the people to return to their homes at present.

(vi) The population of certain parts of London was showing reluctance to make use of their Anderson shelters and of the street shelters. They preferred to congregate in other underground accommodation—for example, under churches, schools and public buildings.

The Home Secretary said that this tendency was due in part to a number of street shelters having suffered direct hits.

(vii) The Minister of Health said that this overcrowding might well give rise to a health problem. Thus inoculation against diphtheria and scarlet fever might be necessary. Public opinion would have to be prepared before such measures could be put into effect. He had appointed a Committee to report at an early date on these matters. The Committee included Lord Horder (Chairman), Sir Wyndham Deedes and representatives of the Ministry of Home Security and the Ministry of Health.

(viii) The Lord President of the Council said that, as directed by the War Cabinet on the 11th September, he had had two meetings with the Ministers concerned, to review the steps taken to deal with the damage caused by air raids in the London area to public utility services, transport and food supplies, &c. He proposed to render a formal Report, but the War Cabinet might like to know that, while considerable damage had been effected, the amount of stocks of any
particular type destroyed was not alarming. In no case had more than two days' consumption of any food commodity been destroyed. Steps were being taken to effect further dispersal of stocks where called for.

The War Cabinet took note of these statements.

3. The War Cabinet discussed the possibility of increasing the air raid shelter accommodation for the population of London. The use of the tubes for this purpose was proposed.

The Minister of Transport said he had examined the question whether the tubes should be used for air raid shelters, but he still agreed with the conclusions of the Committee which had examined the question before the war, namely, that it was more important to keep the tubes available for transport services.

The Secretary of State for Home Affairs and the Minister of Home Security said that the Commissioner of Police strongly deprecated the use of the tubes as shelters. The public had been educated to use shelters and there was broadly sufficient shelter accommodation available for the majority of the population. Advice urging the public to use shelters was continually being given, and new shelters were being built as soon as material was available.

Materials for air raid shelters did not, however, enjoy a very high priority, and the supply presented some difficulty.

The War Cabinet agreed—

That it was important that it should continue to be impressed on the public that they should take shelter during air raids, and that the shelters provided, while not affording immunity from a direct hit, offered the best protection available.

4. The War Cabinet had before them a Minute by the Chief of the Air Staff (W.P. (40) 368) on the effect of enemy bombing of railways in the London area.

The Minister of Transport said that more than half the trouble was caused by unexploded bombs. The priority for the use of bomb disposal units was decided by the Regional Commissioner. He thought that vital points on railways should receive higher priority; that inspection should be made as soon as possible to determine what were unexploded time bombs; that additional units should be made available, and that a number of bomb disposal units should be specially allocated for use on the railways.

The Secretary of State for War said that steps had been taken to increase the number of these units in the London area from 12 last Tuesday, to 22. A further increase to 28 was contemplated.

The Minister of Home Security, after paying a tribute to the work of bomb disposal units under General Taylor, said that he deprecated earmarking a number of these units for railway work only. It was important that our resources in this respect should be pooled, and that the decision as to priorities should remain in the hands of the Regional Commissioner.

The War Cabinet—

Invited the Secretary of State for War to determine, in consultation with the Minister of Home Security and the Minister of Transport, the best means of ensuring that a due proportion of the available bomb disposal units was made available for dealing with unexploded bombs on the railways.
5. In the course of the Meeting, the War Cabinet were informed that a dive-bombing attack had been carried out on Buckingham Palace.

The War Cabinet invited the Prime Minister to send the following message on their behalf to His Majesty The King:

"The War Cabinet offer their hearty congratulations to their Majesties on their providential escape from the barbarous attack made on their home and Royal Persons."

The War Cabinet also agreed that, subject to His Majesty's consent, the fullest publicity should be given to this message.

6. The Prime Minister said that he was convinced that it was too dangerous for Parliament to sit after dark.

He had decided not to call the House together on Monday, the 16th September. The House would therefore meet as originally proposed on Tuesday, the 17th September, at 2.45 p.m. and sit on Wednesday at 11 a.m. It might also be necessary to meet on Thursday at 11 a.m.

The Prime Minister added that he would make a statement on Tuesday, the 16th, and propose that in future the House should meet at 11 a.m. instead of 2.45 p.m. and adjourn at 4 or 4.30 p.m. instead of 11 or 11.30 p.m. Questions being taken from 11 a.m. till 12 o'clock. The necessary motion to give effect to this proposal would be moved on Wednesday, the 18th September. Similar arrangements would be made in the House of Lords. Both Houses would adjourn the following week till Tuesday, the 1st October.

Attention was also drawn to a leading article in a daily paper, urging that Parliament should now resume its full programme of Sessions. The Prime Minister said that it would be impossible for Ministers to carry on with the essential business which they had to transact in present circumstances, from hour to hour, if they had also to attend to Parliamentary duties.

The Prime Minister suggested that some preliminary indication of the Government's intentions in this matter should be given by Party Leaders to their followers before the House assembled on Tuesday. In particular, emphasis might be laid on the important duties which Members could perform in their constituencies at the present critical time.

7. The War Cabinet were informed that the loss of steel production due to air raid warnings in the week ending the 31st August amounted to the equivalent of nearly 50,000 tons of finished steel, i.e., from an average of 254,000 tons a week in 1939 to 207,000 tons. Owing to the glow or glare from the processes involved, steel production was almost as much impeded by the "yellow" as by the "red" warnings. It was understood that the Steel Manufacturers were meeting to consider what action could be taken to deal with the situation.

The War Cabinet considered whether any improvement could be made in the present system of warnings, supplemented by the system of watchers. This system was being rapidly extended, and it was hoped that the organisations of employers and employees would press for its use wherever practicable.

The Minister without Portfolio thought that it would be of advantage if appeals could be made at particular works or localities by Ministers and national and local leaders.

The War Cabinet—

Agreed that every endeavour should be made to press forward with the organisation of a system of look-out men.
South America.

British Political and Trade Mission.

8. The War Cabinet had before them a Memorandum by the Minister of Shipping (W.P. (G.) (40) 234), relating to the suggestion that a first-class ship (the Almeda Star) should be placed at the disposal of a Political and Trade Mission to be headed by Lord Willingdon, which it was proposed to send to South America.

The President of the Board of Trade said that the Mission was one of considerable importance. It was necessary to restore our trade position in South America. Orders were now falling off from that part of the world and there was no belief that we could deliver goods. The Americans were stealing our trade under cover of German propaganda which spread reports that this country was not in a position to send ships or deliver goods.

The Minister of Shipping said that the use of the Almeda Star for such a purpose would mean that our shipping programme would suffer; this was already behind schedule. Further, we had urged our Allies to put at our disposal all their best vessels for essential carrying trades and the effect on them of sending one of our best ships on such a mission might be unfortunate.

The general view of the War Cabinet was that, notwithstanding the importance of the Mission, we should not be justified in putting this ship at its disposal for four months.

The Minister of Shipping said that he thought arrangements could probably be made to send the Mission to South America on a British ship which would go out to South America to fetch back cargo.

The War Cabinet decided—

(a) That the Almeda Star should not be put at the disposal of the British Mission to South America.

(b) That the President of the Board of Trade was free to continue the arrangements for the Mission, provided other arrangements were made for its transport to South America and accommodation there.

Information.

Proposed "Omnibus" Communiqué.

9. The War Cabinet—

Agreed with the recommendation of the Minister of Information contained in W.P. (G.) (40) 233 relating to the issue of an "omnibus" communiqué.

Richmond Terrace, S.W. 1,
September 13, 1940.
WAR CABINET 250 (40).

CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held in the Cabinet War Room, S.W. 1, on Monday, September 16, 1940, at 12 Noon.

Present:

The Right Hon. WINSTON S. CHURCHILL, M.P., Prime Minister (in the Chair).

The Right Hon. NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN, M.P., Lord President of the Council.


The Right Hon. A. GREENWOOD, M.P., Minister without Portfolio.

The Right Hon. JOHN ANDERSON, M.P., Secretary of State for Dominion Home Department and Minister of Home Security.

The Right Hon. VISCOUNT CALDECOTE, M.P., Secretary of State for India and Secretary of State for Burma (Item 6).


The Right Hon. A. V. ALEXANDER, M.P., Secretary of State for Air.

The Right Hon. ANTHONY EDEN, M.P., Secretary of State for War.

The Right Hon. MALCOLM MACDONALD, M.P., Minister of Information (Items 1 to 3).

The Hon. ALEXANDER CADOGAN, Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

Air Chief Marshal Sir CYRIL L. N. NEWALL, Chief of the Air Staff.

Admiral of the Fleet SIR DUDLEY POUND, First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff.

General Sir JOHN DILL, Chief of the Imperial General Staff.

Secretariat.

SIR EDWARD BRIDGES.

Mr. W. D. WILKINSON.

Mr. L. F. BURGIS.
**WAR CABINET 250 (40).**

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</table>
Naval, Military and Air Operations.

(Previous Reference: W.M. (40) 249th Conclusions, Minute 1.)

1. The Chief of the Air Staff said that the casualties during the 24 hours ended 7 A.M. that morning had been as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enemy —</th>
<th>Destroyed</th>
<th>Probable</th>
<th>Damaged</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bombers</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By our Fighters—</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unidentified</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By A.A. —</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unidentified</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Civilian Casualties.

During the week ended 6 A.M. 14th September, the civilian casualties had been 1,286 killed and 5,699 injured in London and 133 killed and 404 injured in the rest of the country.

As the figures of air casualties indicated, the fighting of the previous day had been most successful. The enemy had adopted bolder tactics; these had served only to increase his losses. The figures of enemy bombers destroyed were very striking.

We had carried out attacks on a large scale on barges and shipping at Boulogne, Dunkirk, Ostend, Calais, Antwerp and Havre, and a small scale attack on the West Power Station at Berlin. All our aircraft had returned safely, but full reports had not yet been received. One of the aircraft returning from Berlin had claimed a hit with a 250 pound bomb on a German cruiser near Terschelling.

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff reported that Sollum was now in the hands of the Italians. It was believed that our small forces had extricated themselves. There were signs of an Italian advance in two columns towards Buq-buq. The enemy forces employed consisted of about two strong brigade groups, with two battalions of medium tanks and a proportion of Corps Medium Artillery.

The First Sea Lord reported that H.M. Sloop Dundee had been torpedoed in the North-West Approaches and had sunk on the previous day.

The enemy attacks on trade, although still serious, had abated during the last ten days, in spite of the fact that we had recalled a number of destroyers from trade protection duties.

H.M. Submarine Parthian had attacked and probably sunk a Zara class Cruiser (10,000 tons) about 150 miles E.S.E. of Messina on the 31st August.

The War Cabinet —

Took note of the above statements and invited the Prime Minister to send a further message of congratulations on their behalf to the Royal Air Force.

2. The War Cabinet had before them a Report, dated the 14th September, by the Lord President of the Council (W.P. (40) 371) on air raid damage in the London area.

The Lord President of the Council said that a further Meeting had been held that morning of the Ministers concerned and he was now able to bring the information in his report up to date.

Electricity, Water and Gas.—No further substantial damage had been sustained.
Drainage.—The statement in his Report that it would take several months to repair the pumping machinery was inaccurate. The pumps had been repaired, and it was hoped that the breached sewers could be repaired in two or three weeks.

Docks.—No further major damage had been sustained.

Railways.—There had been a very definite improvement in marshalling yards and depots. In the three days ended the 16th September nearly 60 per cent. of the normal war traffic had been carried. The Southern Railway was still the line most affected.

Food Stocks.—The amount of sugar lost now amounted to a week's supply. Some copra (used for margarine) had also been lost. The damage done to cold storage plants might make it necessary to build further plants. The Minister of Food would submit a report on this point.

Raw Materials.—Effect was being given to the steps outlined in the Report for the further dispersal of stocks.

Assistance to Homeless Persons.—The numbers in Rest Centres had dropped from about 17,000 to 10,000 or 11,000, and the Centres were functioning much more satisfactorily.

Evacuation.—The delegation of powers to Regional Commissioners to authorise evacuation in cases of special emergency was being communicated to them that day.

Air raid shelter. The Prime Minister referred to a report in the Press that a body of people, looking for air raid shelter, had made their way into the Savoy Hotel. Episodes of this kind could easily lead to serious trouble.

The Home Secretary said that there were some signs of organised demonstrations, especially by persons who came from the East End into the West End, where they thought that better shelter could be found. He agreed with the Prime Minister that it would be necessary to take strong action to prevent demonstrations of this kind, which if allowed to grow, might easily lead to serious difficulties.

The Minister of Aircraft Production suggested that the basement of the banks in the East End might be opened up as shelters.

The Home Secretary said that there was a good deal of shelter in the City which was not being used; but the fire risk must be taken into consideration.

The Lord Privy Seal stressed the need for publicity for the measures which the Government was taking to deal with air raid damage and to assist homeless people. Unless these measures received proper publicity, it was apt to be assumed that nothing was being done. The Minister of Health said that he was arranging a Press Conference that afternoon for this purpose.

The Prime Minister suggested to the Lord President of the Council that he might make a statement on this subject in Parliament on Wednesday, the 18th September.
Parliament.

Arrangements for Meetings of both Houses.
(Previous Reference: W.M. (40) 249th Conclusions, Minute 6.)

3. The Prime Minister said that when Parliament met on Tuesday, the 17th September, he proposed to make a short statement in public session, in which he would mention the German preparations for invasion, the great air successes in the last few days and the position in the Middle East. He then proposed to invite the House to go into Secret Session. In Secret Session he would explain that, although certain precautionary measures had been taken that day, there was nevertheless a considerable risk in the House meeting at advertised times. It was not right that the meetings of the House should impose a special burden on the air defence of this country. He proposed that in future the time and date on which the House intended to meet should not be announced beforehand, nor should the Press be allowed to state after the event at what time the House had met. He invited the Minister of Information to issue suitable instructions to the Press in regard to this matter, and covering both Houses of Parliament.

The War Cabinet took note with approval of this statement.

Operation "Menace."
(Previous Reference: W.M. (40) 235th Conclusions, Minute 7, and 249th Conclusions, Minute 1.)

4. The War Cabinet had before them a Report by the Chiefs of Staff (C.O.S. (40) 4 (O)) relating to operation "Menace." The discussion and the conclusions reached are recorded in the Secretary's Standard File of War Cabinet Conclusions.

The Allies.

Organisation of Allied Naval, Army and Air Contingents.
(Previous Reference: W.M. (40) 240th Conclusions, Minute 8.)

5. The War Cabinet took note of the Seventh Report by the Chiefs of Staff on the organisation of the Allied Naval, Army and Air Contingents (W.P. (40) 367).

India.

Proposed promulgation of Revolutionary Movement Ordinances.
(Previous Reference: W.M. (40) 217th Conclusions, Minute 8.)

6. The War Cabinet had before them a Memorandum by the Secretary of State for India (W.P. (G.) (40) 237) as to the attitude of Congress. Information had been received that Congress might pass a resolution in the next few days which would bring them into open conflict with the Government of India. If this happened, the Viceroy proposed, and the Secretary of State agreed, that the Revolutionary Movement Ordinance, suitably amended, should be promulgated forthwith.

The Secretary of State for India explained that this Paper had been circulated as a precautionary measure, in case Congress should pass a defiant resolution. In his telegram to the Viceroy of
the 13th September he had stressed the importance of basing our
action on the threat of anti-war activities on the part of Congress.

It now seemed much less likely than two days earlier that
Congress would pass a resolution in the terms suggested, and he had
good hope that it would not in fact prove necessary to take drastic
action. He thought, however, that the Viceroy should be in a
position to take such action at once if the need arose.

In discussion, the Lord Privy Seal said that, while one wing
of Congress no doubt wanted to take extreme action, other elements
in Congress by no means wanted to break with us. He deprecated
giving the Viceroy carte blanche to take drastic action immediately
on the passing of a resolution by Congress and without reference
to the War Cabinet. If any precipitate action was taken it might
have very serious consequences.

The Secretary of State for Home Affairs suggested that the
Viceroy should be informed in quite definite terms that, if it was
clear that Congress was determined to embark on a campaign of
defiance, the War Cabinet would not hesitate to agree to drastic
action being taken immediately against the Congress leaders. At
the same time, the War Cabinet should have an opportunity to
consider the situation created by any Congress resolution, before
such action was taken.

The Home Secretary said that he thought that Gandhi was
rather alarmed at the way in which the situation had developed, and
that it was for this reason that he was indulging in vague language.

General agreement was expressed with the Home Secretary's
suggestion.

The Prime Minister said that he thought it was very important
that the Viceroy should know that he would be supported in taking
action against the Congress leaders, if they embarked on a defiant
course.

The War Cabinet—

Invited the Secretary of State for India to communicate
to the Viceroy the War Cabinet's views as shown in
discussion. These may be summarised as follows:—

(1) The Viceroy should be assured that the War Cabinet
would agree to the enactment of all necessary
measures such as the Revolutionary Movement
Ordinance, and to support firm action being taken
against the Congress leaders, the moment it was
established that Congress was determined to embark
on a campaign of deliberate interference with the
conduct of the war.

(2) The War Cabinet, however, wished to have an
opportunity of considering the actual situation
created by any Congress resolution as soon as the
resolution became known, before action was taken,
and assumed that a delay of 24 hours would not
hamper the Viceroy in this matter.

Richmond Terrace, S.W. 1,
September 16, 1940.
SECRET.

W.M. (40)

251st Conclusions.

TO BE KEPT UNDER LOCK AND KEY.

It is requested that special care may be taken to ensure the secrecy of this document.

WAR CABINET 251 (40).

CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held in the Cabinet War Room, S.W. 1, on Tuesday, September 17, 1940, at 12 noon.

Present:

The Right Hon. WINSTON S. CHURCHILL, M.P., Prime Minister (in the Chair).
The Right Hon. NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN, M.P., Lord President of the Council.
The Right Hon. A. GREENWOOD, M.P., Minister without Portfolio.

The following were also present:
The Right Hon. Sir KINGSLEY WOOD, M.P., Chancellor of the Exchequer (Item 4).
The Right Hon. Sir Archibald Sinclair, Bt., M.P., Secretary of State for Air.
The Right Hon. ANTHONY EDEN, M.P., Secretary of State for War.
The Right Hon. VISCOUNT CALDECOTE, The Right Hon. A. V. ALEXANDER, M.P., Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs (Items 1 to 3).
The Right Hon. ERNEST BROWN, M.P., Secretary of State for Scotland (Items 5 and 6).
The Right Hon. ERNEST BEVIN, M.P., Minister of Labour and National Service (Items 5 and 6).
The Hon. Sir ALEXANDER CADOGAN, Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.
The Right Hon. ANTHONY EDEN, M.P., Secretary of State for Air.
The Right Hon. MALCOLM MACDONALD, M.P., Minister of Health (Items 5 and 6).
The Right Hon. A. DUFF COOPER, M.P., Minister of Information.

General Sir JOHN DILL, Chief of the Imperial General Staff.

Secretariat.

Sir EDWARD BRIDGES.
Major-General Sir HASTINGS ISMAY.
Mr. W. D. WILKINSON.
Mr. L. F. BURGIS.
## WAR CABINET 251 (40).

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Naval, Military and Air Situations.

(Previous Reference: W.M. (40) 250th Conclusions, Minute 1.)

Air Operations:

Home Commands and Middle East.

The Secretary of State for Air said that there was little to report regarding air activity during the previous day. Two German machines had been brought down, one of them by the balloon barrage.

All operations of the Bomber and Coastal Command had been cancelled on the previous night owing to bad weather conditions.

A mixed force of Gladiators, Hurricanes and Blenheims had shot down over Sidi Barrani six enemy machines (confirmed) plus two probables, with the loss of one machine to themselves.

Successful bombing attacks had been made on Asmara airdrome on the 14th instant, and on Gura, Massawa and Ali Gura on the 15th. Fires had also been started in the Caproni works 30 miles south of Asmara.

The First Lord of the Admiralty reported that two sweeps had been made in the English Channel on the previous day, without anything of importance being observed.

On the 16th September the French S.S. Poitiers had abandoned ship on sighting H.M.S. Cumberland and attempted to scuttle herself. The Cumberland had picked up the crew and then sunk the vessel by gunfire.

The Prime Minister doubted whether it was wise to open fire on a French ship for this purpose when our relations with the Vichy Government were so delicate. He thought that orders should be issued to prevent similar incidents occurring in the future.

The First Lord of the Admiralty, continuing, reported that on the 16th instant H.M.S. Cumberland had intercepted the Spanish ship S.S. Domine, placed an armed guard on board and ordered her to Freetown for examination. S.S. Mobile, with a cargo of mechanical transport and stores for abroad, had been sunk by aircraft.

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff undertook to ascertain what quantities of mechanical transport and other stores had been lost by the sinking of this ship, and to report on the purposes for which this mechanical transport and stores had been required.

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff reported that on the previous evening two enemy columns had occupied Sidi Barrani. The enemy had sustained heavy casualties from harassing action by our tanks and from our artillery fire. It now seemed that three divisions had crossed the frontier. Two divisions extended from Sidi Barrani to Sollum with a second Libyan division dispersed between Sidi Omar and Halfaya. Air reconnaissance had disclosed no important movement towards Bardia from the West.

Discussion ensued on the Military situation in Egypt and the number of our troops available to meet an Italian attack.

At the request of the War Cabinet, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff undertook to obtain further information from the Commander-in-Chief, Middle East, as to the present disposition of his forces, and his immediate intentions.

The War Cabinet took note of the above statements.
2. The First Lord of the Admiralty gave the War Cabinet certain further information in regard to Operation "Menace," a record of which is contained in the Secretary's Standard File of War Cabinet Conclusions.

3. The Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs said that the Swiss Minister had called that morning on the Parliamentary Under-Secretary to protest against the terms of our recent Note about British aircraft passing over Swiss territory. The Minister had said that his Government could not accept the statement in our Note that the flights over Swiss territory had been due to errors of navigation. He had asked Mr. Butler to delay sending a reply, at any rate until Lord Halifax had returned, since he feared that, if it could not be in more emphatic terms than our recent Note, the effect on Anglo-Swiss relations would be serious.

The Permanent Under-Secretary of State said that our draft reply brought out that attacks were now being made on this country by Germany from countries which had been neutral until invaded by Germany; and that Italy, by coming into the war on Germany's side, had endorsed Germany's disregard of neutral rights. Subject to confirmation, it would be added that Italian aircraft had frequently violated Spanish neutrality when making attacks on our forces. Generally speaking, the reply came rather more into the open in regard to our intention to continue flights over Swiss territory.

It was desirable that our reply should be handed in before any further flights over Switzerland took place. If the delivery of the Note was delayed until the Foreign Secretary's return on Monday, the 23rd instant, this would mean suspending air operations against North Italy for almost a week. The Swiss Minister was clearly playing for time, and seemed to be under the delusion that winter conditions would make it impossible for aircraft from this country to deliver air attacks on North Italy.

The War Cabinet—

Agreed that our reply to the Swiss protest should be delivered on the following day, and that no further flights of British aircraft should take place over Swiss territory until the Air Ministry had been informed by the Foreign Office that the reply had been delivered.

4. The War Cabinet had before them a Memorandum by the Chancellor of the Exchequer (W.P. (G.) (40) 236) proposing certain increases, which had been agreed with the Service Ministers, in the family and dependants' allowances for members of the Forces. The cost of the revised rates, which it was proposed should operate from the most convenient pay date near to the 1st November, 1940, was estimated at £8 millions a year for each million men.

The proposed alterations in the family allowances were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Allowances</th>
<th>Present</th>
<th>New</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wife</td>
<td>17s</td>
<td>18s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife and 1 child</td>
<td>23s</td>
<td>25s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife and 2 children</td>
<td>27s</td>
<td>30s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife and 3 children</td>
<td>29s</td>
<td>34s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife and 4 children</td>
<td>32s</td>
<td>38s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Each extra child</td>
<td>3s</td>
<td>4s</td>
</tr>
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The Lord Privy Seal criticised the revised family allowances proposed on the grounds, first, that they were inadequate, taken
together with the soldier’s allotment, to maintain the minimum standard of living to which a soldier’s wife and family were entitled; and, secondly, that they compared unfavourably with other allowances paid by the Government. He thought that the amount allowed for children of members of the fighting forces should be considered in relation to the allowances for children in other State schemes.

Taking into account the recent rise in the cost of living, the adjustment in the case of a wife ought to be an increase of the order of 3s. 6d., not an increase of 1s. Difficulty was likely to be experienced in getting the House of Commons to agree to the proposals in their present form.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer said that the state of the national finances would not justify increases greater than he had proposed. The demand for increases had come only from the Army and there was no reason for believing that the Navy and the Air Force were not content with the present scales.

The Secretary of State for War said that the aim had been to improve the position of the wife with three children rather than that of the wife with no children. In all probability, most soldiers’ wives without children were now themselves working.

The War Cabinet—

(a) Invited the Lord Privy Seal to arrange for the proposals in W.P. (G.) (40) 236 to be reviewed by a meeting of the Home Policy Committee (Social Services Section) which the Chancellor of the Exchequer and Service Ministers should be invited to attend, and to report to the War Cabinet.

(b) Agreed that whatever new scales were eventually approved should operate from the most convenient pay date near to the 1st November, 1940.

(c) Invited the Secretary of State for War to answer the Parliamentary Question on the subject that afternoon, by saying that the matter was under review, and that an announcement would be made as soon as possible.

Civil Defence.
Recruitment of part-time volunteers.

5. The War Cabinet had before them a Memorandum by the Minister of Home Security (W.P. (G.) (40) 235).

The Minister of Home Security explained that in certain areas there had been an unsatisfactory response to appeals for part-time volunteers for Civil Defence Services. One course would be to make part-time unpaid service compulsory. But this would involve legislation and would not be desirable until other alternatives had been exhausted.

The Ministers concerned thought that the right course was to arrange for a further personal appeal to be addressed to men in selected reserved occupations. Some help was already being obtained by reciprocal arrangements between the Home Guard and Civil Defence Services.

The War Cabinet—

Gave general approval to the proposals of the Minister of Home Security summarised in paragraph 6 of his Memorandum (W.P. (G.) (40) 235).
6. The Prime Minister read to the War Cabinet passages from the statement he intended to make in the House of Commons that afternoon. He intended to propose that, after the meetings during the present week, an announcement should be made that Parliament would adjourn to Tuesday, the 15th October—subject to an understanding that Parliament would in fact be summoned privately to meet at an earlier date.

The War Cabinet approved this suggestion.

Richmond Terrace, S.W. 1,
September 17, 1940.
CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held in the Cabinet War Room, S.W. 1, on Tuesday, September 17, 1940, at 9 P.M.

Present:

The Right Hon. W. S. Churchill, M.P., Prime Minister (in the Chair).


The Right Hon. C. R. Attlee, M.P., Minister without Portfolio.

The Right Hon. Lord Beaverbrook, Minister of Aircraft Production.

The following were also present:

The Right Hon. Lord Lloyd, Secretary of State for the Colonies.

The Right Hon. Anthony Eden, M.P., Secretary of State for War.


The Right Hon. Sir Archibald Sinclair, Bt., M.P., Secretary of State for Air.

Air Chief Marshal Sir Cyril L. N. Newall, Chief of the Air Staff.

General Sir John Dill, Chief of the Imperial General Staff.

Secretariat:

Sir Edward Bridges.

Major-General Sir Hastings Ismay.

Mr. W. D. Wilkinson.

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Proposed institution of a new Honour.
1. A further discussion took place on Operation "Menace." A record of the discussion, and of the conclusions reached, is contained in the Secretary's Standard File of War Cabinet Conclusions.

2. The Prime Minister said that the civil population was now in the front line. He had asked the Home Secretary to submit recommendations for the immediate award of honours to a number of persons in the Air Raid Precautions Services, the Police and the Fire Brigade, to nurses and to civilians not in those Services, who merited a reward by bravery. The authorities in the Regions were, of course, all very fully occupied, and there had been some difficulty in getting sufficient attention paid to the submission of recommendations. It was also difficult to get uniformity of procedure and standards in the different parts of the country. He had therefore invited Lord Chatfield to undertake the important task of co-ordinating procedure and standards between the different parts of the country.

Continuing, the Prime Minister said that he also had in mind the possibility of instituting a new Honour to be awarded to civilians, including, of course, members of the Police and A.R.P. Services. Members of the fighting Services might also be eligible for awards in respect of acts of gallantry performed while on duty. Men and women would both be eligible, and posthumous awards should, he thought, be made. He had mentioned the matter informally to His Majesty, who had expressed general approval.

One suggestion, for which, of course, His Majesty's approval would be necessary, was that the Honour, which might well be in two Classes, should be described as the "George Cross" and the "George Medal."

The Secretary of State for the Colonies hoped that the new honour would not be limited to Home Defence and that civilians in the Colonies (e.g., Malta) would also be eligible.

The Secretary of State for War said that he was faced with the difficulty of providing an adequate reward for the personnel of bomb disposal units. It had hitherto been the practice that, e.g., the D.S.O., the D.C.M. and the M.M. were awarded for acts of gallantry in face of the enemy, and not for what might be described as acts of gallantry in cold blood. While he agreed that the work of the bomb disposal units called for bravery in a very high form indeed, on the whole he felt that the practice of keeping the D.S.O., &c., for actions performed in face of the enemy should be maintained. He was therefore proposing to award the Empire Gallantry Medal to members of the bomb disposal units. The first four awards would be gazetted on the following morning.

In discussion, the Secretary of State for War agreed that the Empire Gallantry Medal was at present not widely known. He fully agreed that the awards of the Empire Gallantry Medal now to be made must set a very high standard, and must bring this Medal to a very high point in public esteem.

The War Cabinet expressed general approval of the proposals outlined by the Prime Minister for the institution of a new Honour.

Richmond Terrace, S.W. 1,
September 17, 1940.
CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held in the Prime Minister's Room, House of Commons, S.W. 1, on Wednesday, September 18, 1940, at 12 noon.

Present:

The Right Hon. WINSTON S. CHURCHILL, M.P., Prime Minister (in the Chair).

The Right Hon. NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN, M.P., Lord President of the Council.


The Right Hon. A. GREENWOOD, M.P., Minister without Portfolio.

The Right Hon. VISCOUNT CALDECOTE, The Right Hon. LORD LLOYD, Secretary of State for the Colonies.


The Right Hon. ANTHONY EDEN, M.P., Secretary of State for War.

The Right Hon. LORD BEAVERBROOK, Minister of Aircraft Production.

The Right Hon. ARCHIBALD SINCLAIR, Bt., M.P., Secretary of State for Air.

The Hon. ALEXANDER CADOGAN, Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

Air Chief Marshal Sir CYRIL L. N. NEWALL, Chief of the Air Staff.

Admiral of the Fleet Sir DUDLEY FOUNT, First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff.

General Sir JOHN DILL, Chief of the Imperial General Staff.

Secretariat.

Sir EDWARD BRIDGES.

Major-General Sir HASTINGS ISMAY.
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Naval, Military and Air Operations.

(Previous Reference: W.M. (40) 250th Conclusions, Minute 1.)

Air Operations over this country.

Air Operations in the Middle East.

Naval Operations.

Enemy attacks on shipping.

Military Operations: Middle East.

Loss of S.S. City of Mobile.

Air Raid Warnings.

(Previous Reference: W.M. (40) 249th Conclusions, Minute 7.)

1. The Chief of the Air Staff said that, in the 24 hours ending 7 A.M. that morning, the enemy had lost 10 aircraft (confirmed), of which 6 had been brought down by the fighters and 4 by guns. We had lost 5 aircraft, but only one pilot.

Enemy activity had been mainly directed against London and the South-East. There had been a few raids on Wales and the Midlands.

Over 200 aircraft had carried out bombing operations on the previous night, of which one had been lost. The main force of the attack had been directed against the invasion ports.

Aircraft in the Middle East had carried out some successful attacks. Malta had been heavily attacked by a force including German dive-bombers. Two of our machines had been destroyed on the ground, and we had brought down three enemy aircraft.

The First Sea Lord said that H.M.S. Sussex had been bombed at 3 A.M. that morning in the Clyde and a serious fire started. H.M.S. Kent, which had been ordered to bombard Bardia, had been torpedoed or mined north-east of that place.

Two merchant ships had been torpedoed in the North-Western Approaches, and two others had been damaged by aircraft.

The master of the S.S. Fireglow reported that he had seen one of our convoys machine-gunned by an enemy aircraft painted white with a Red Cross superimposed.

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff said that two enemy columns had reached Sidi Barrani and were halted there. Bodies of tanks south-east and south-west of Sidi Barrani appeared to be an advance guard and flank guard to the main forces.

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff read a telegram from General Wavell explaining his dispositions.

The Secretary of State for War reported that the quantity of mechanical transport lost on this ship was not substantial.

The War Cabinet took note of these statements.

2. The Prime Minister said that, as the result of the large number of warnings which had been given through single aircraft approaching London in the daytime, he had asked the Air Ministry to give orders that in the London area during hours of daylight a "red" warning should not normally be given on account of the presence of single enemy aircraft.

The War Cabinet—

(1) Endorsed the action taken by the Prime Minister.

(2) Invited the Minister of Home Security to give directions that the period during which the sirens sounded the "All Clear" should be reduced from 2 minutes to 1 minute, to correspond with the reduction already made in the period for which the "red" warning was sounded.
3. The Minister of Aircraft Production reported that during the previous night the Murex Magnesium factory at Rainham had been set on fire and seriously damaged.

The Prime Minister said that the enemy had dropped magnetic mines on this country on the previous night. The blast of the explosion from magnetic mines was very great and would destroy glass over a wide area. He had already given directions that the supply of glass should be investigated and the utmost economy practised in its use. He thought it should be the rule that, where glass was broken in large windows, only part of the windows should be replaced by glass, the rest being filled with some other material. It might also be necessary to direct that the glass should be taken out of some of the panes of large windows in particularly exposed localities and stored as a reserve.

4 and 5. Further discussion ensued on these questions and is recorded in the Secretary's Standard File of War Cabinet Conclusions.

Richmond Terrace, S.W. 1, September 18, 1940.
CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held in the Prime Minister's Room, House of Commons, S.W. 1, on Thursday, September 19, 1940, at 12 Noon.

Present:

The Right Hon. WINSTON S. CHURCHILL, M.P., Prime Minister (in the Chair).
The Right Hon. LORD BEAVERBROOK, Minister of Aircraft Production.
The Right Hon. SIR KINGSLEY WOOD, The Right Hon. SIR JOHN ANDERSON, M.P., Chancellor of the Exchequer, Secretary of State for the Home Department and Minister of Home Security.
The Right Hon. VISCOUNT CALDECOTE, The Right Hon. L. W. CROSS, M.P., Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs.
The Right Hon. SIR ARCHIBALD SINCLAIR, Bt., M.P., Secretary of State for Air.
The Right Hon. A. DUFF COOPER, M.P., Minister of Information.
Air Chief Marshal Sir CYRIL L. N. NEWALL, Chief of the Air Staff.
General Sir JOHN DILL, Chief of the Imperial General Staff.

Secretariat.

SIR EDWARD BRIDGES,
Major-General SIR HASTINGS ISMAY.
Mr. W. D. WILKINSON.
Mr. L. F. BURGIS.

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Naval, Military and Air Operations.

1. The Chief of the Air Staff said that the air casualties during the twenty-four hours ending 7 A.M. that morning had been as follows:

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Air Casualties

Our Losses.

Twelve aircraft, but 9 pilots safe.

Nearly 200 British aircraft had carried out bombing operations on the previous night, mainly against the invasion ports. Except for attacks on Berlin, which would be resumed as soon as the weather was favourable, it was intended that our bombing effort should be concentrated almost entirely against these ports.

The First Sea Lord reported that H.M.S. Golden Eagle had hit an aircraft which had been about to lay mines in the Thames Estuary during the night 17th-18th September. The aircraft had exploded in mid-air.

The U-Boat which had been attacked by an aircraft of the Fleet Air Arm off Cape Wrath on the 14th September had almost certainly been destroyed.

A report had just been received that our submarines were attacking 8 enemy merchant ships off Texel.

On the 16th September an aircraft from Illustrious had set one merchant ship on fire at Benghazi, damaged several other ships and sunk a destroyer.

A further report had now been received about H.M.S. Kent. She had been attacked by two torpedo aircraft in bright moonlight at midnight on the 17th-18th September. She had been hit by one torpedo which was suspected to have been of the magnetic pistol type. Nubian had had her in tow by 3 A.M. and she ought to arrive in harbour that day.

On the night of the 17th-18th September Ladybird had bombarded the Escarpment Road, Sollum, at close range, while Juno and Janus had attacked enemy concentrations at Sidi Barrani.

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff said that there was no news of importance from the Western frontier of Egypt. The Italians appeared to be consolidating their position at Sidi Barrani.

There were signs of an Italian advance on the Sudan front, south of Kassala. The enemy appeared to have crossed the River Gash and to have completed the concentration of a column consisting of some 6,000 men, together with artillery, tanks and lorries. It appeared unlikely that any deep move into the Sudan would be attempted before October. The R.A.F. were attacking the enemy concentrations.

Part of force "Niblick" had landed at Port Sudan and was now reinforcing the Sudan.

The War Cabinet took note of the above statements.

2. Further information was reported in regard to the movements of the French Fleet, and is recorded in the Secretary's Standard File of War Cabinet Conclusions.
Overseas Evacuation.

The First Sea Lord reported that four merchant ships had been sunk. These included the *City of Benares*, which had had on board 100 children and 100 adults for Montreal. On present information the saved included only 18 women and 15 children. The *Benares*’ boats had been rushed by lascars and capsized. The view was expressed that there was much to be said, in present circumstances, for discontinuing the scheme for evacuating children overseas.

The War Cabinet—

1. Invited the Minister of Information to arrange for suitable publicity to be given to the torpedoing of this ship.
2. Invited the Home Secretary to report to the War Cabinet whether, in present circumstances, the scheme for evacuating children overseas should be continued.

Air Raid Damage.

Magnetic mines.

The Secretary of State for the Home Department and Minister of Home Security said that considerable damage had been done by air raids in the London area during the previous twenty-four hours. Some 200 people had been killed and some 550 admitted to hospital. On the other hand, the position on the railways was easier. On the Southern Railway power supply and signalling had been restored at Victoria (Central). There did not appear to have been any special concentration on railways during the previous night.

The most serious development had been the continued dropping of parachute mines, probably of the magnetic type, some 12 of which had been dropped over the London area during the night of the 17th-18th September and some 25 during the night of the 18th-19th September. The damage to the L.C.C. County Hall during the previous night had almost certainly been due to a parachute mine. The blast of the explosion from these mines was so great that it had been found necessary to clear the area for 400 yards round the spot, when a mine did not explode.

The War Cabinet—

1. Agreed that we should retaliate by dropping mines over Berlin.
2. Invited the First Sea Lord to report to the Prime Minister on the steps now being taken to fit mines with an attachment for this purpose.

The Sudan.

Appointment of a new Governor-General.

The War Cabinet were informed that Sir Stewart Symes, the Governor-General of the Sudan, had been in indifferent health for some time past and would already have retired, had it not been for the war. His successor was to have been Sir Bernard Bourdillon, the present Governor of Nigeria; Sir Bernard’s appointment had in fact been announced, and the approval of the Egyptian Government obtained. With the outbreak of war, however, it had been decided to extend Sir Stewart Symes’s service, and to keep Sir B. Bourdillon in Nigeria for the time being.

Sir Miles Lampson and General Wavell were both strongly of the opinion that Sir Stewart Symes’s retirement should no longer be postponed.

The War Cabinet—

1. Invited the Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (subject to consultation with the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs) to make arrangements for Sir Stewart Symes to be relieved of his present office as Governor-General of the Sudan forthwith.
6. In connection with the preceding Minute, the War Cabinet—

Invited the Secretary of State for the Colonies to submit a report to the Prime Minister as to the age, experience and suitability for office under war conditions of the Governors of all Colonies likely to be of importance for the conduct of the war.

7. The Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs said that our reply to the recent Swiss Note had been handed to the Swiss Minister on the previous day. The Minister had said that he thought the Note might result in public opinion in Switzerland, and possibly also in the United States, reacting against this country. But he had also said that he appreciated that the Air authorities in this country were faced with a difficult situation, and on the whole, he had taken the Note fairly well.

The Swiss Minister had said that it would take him about 24 hours to deliver the Note to his Government. The Permanent Under-Secretary of State thought that the Air Ministry could therefore assume that the reply had now been delivered.

The War Cabinet took note of this statement, and agreed that the Royal Air Force should now be free to resume attacks on targets in North Italy.

8. The War Cabinet had before them a Memorandum by the Secretary of State for the Colonies (W.P. (40) 374) regarding supplies for Malta.

The Secretary of State for the Colonies said that the policy approved before the war was that Malta should be provisioned for six months. When Italy came into the war, the Governor had stated that he had six months' supplies available. Further, when asked at intervals whether he was satisfied with the position, he had made affirmative replies. The Governor had now telegraphed to say that he was short of all supplies, except coal and wheat. Further, the Chiefs of Staff now considered that the level of essential supplies, both civil and other, in Malta should be built up as soon as practicable to eight months' stock. If this recommendation of the Chiefs of Staff was to be adhered to, it meant that some 80,000 tons would have to be shipped to Malta every month.

The Minister of Shipping said that we were very short of the fast ships which would be necessary to carry the stores through the Mediterranean, but that he would do his best to meet these new demands.

The War Cabinet—

Gave approval in principle to the report and invited the First Lord of the Admiralty to prepare a plan to give effect to it.
9. The War Cabinet had before them a joint Memorandum by the Minister without Portfolio, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the First Lord of the Admiralty and the Minister of Shipping (W.P. (40) 365).

The Minister of Shipping said that the shipping position this time next year would give cause for anxiety, because the rate of replacements of tonnage lost was deplorably low. He would like the War Cabinet to realise that there would be a considerable reduction in our importing capacity this time next year, unless there was an improvement in the tonnage situation.

The Prime Minister said that within the next few months our own new destroyers, now under construction, together with the arrival of the American destroyers, should greatly improve the forces available for escort duties and it was hoped would reduce the present rate of tonnage losses.

The War Cabinet—
Approved the recommendations contained in the summary of W.P. (40) 365.

10. The First Sea Lord asked whether action could be taken in regard to the supply of large flying-boats by the United States of America.

The Prime Minister said that the United States of America had made very large demands in regard to bases. No further action, however, had been taken by them in respect of the supply to us of the further 250,000 rifles, the 20 motor torpedo-boats, the 150 aircraft on order for Sweden and the 10 large flying-boats.

The War Cabinet—
Invited the Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to send an urgent message to Lord Lothian pressing for the supply of these further munitions and, in particular, of the 10 large flying-boats.

Richmond Terrace, S.W. 1,
September 19, 1940.
CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10 Downing Street, S.W. 1, on Friday, September 20, 1940, at 12 Noon.

Present:

The Right Hon. WINSTON S. CHURCHILL, M.P., Prime Minister (in the Chair).

The following were also present:
The Right Hon. ANTHONY EDEN, M.P., The Right Hon. Sir ARCHIBALD SINCLAIR, Bt., M.P., Secretary of State for War.
The Right Hon. MALCOLM MACDONALD, M.P., Minister of Health (Items 6 and 7).
The Right Hon. A. DUFF COOPER, M.P., Minister of Information.

Air Chief Marshal Sir CYRIL L. N. NEWALL, Chief of the Air Staff.

Lieutenant-General Sir ROBERT HAINING, Vice-Chief of the Imperial General Staff.

Mr. A. N. RUCKER, Principal Assistant Secretary, Ministry of Home Security (Items 6 and 7).

Secretariat.

Sir EDWARD BRIDGES.
Major-General Sir HASTINGS ISMAY.
Mr. W. D. WILKINSON.
Mr. L. F. BURGIS.
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Naval, Military and Air Operations.
(Previous Reference: W.M. (40) 254th Conclusions, Minute 4.)

Air Operations: Home Commands.

Air Operations in the Middle East.

Naval Operations.

Shipping Losses.

Military Operations: Middle East.

1. The Secretary of State for Air reported the following casualties for the previous day:

   Our Own—
   Nil.
   Enemy—
   4 Junkers 88: Certain.
   1 Junker 88: Probable.

   In addition, one Junker 88 had been captured complete and undamaged with crew and bombs.

   Fifty-seven machines had been sent out the previous night to attack marshalling yards in West Germany, the Channel ports, and special targets. All the aircraft had returned. The weather had been bad.

   On the 18th September five Wellingtons had attacked the Dodecanese Islands with successful results at Rhodes, Maritza, Calote and Portologo Bay.

   The Chief of Naval Staff reported that H.M.S. Kent had arrived at Alexandria.

   Except for the loss of one oil tanker there had been no shipping losses during the previous 24 hours.

   The Chief of Naval Staff gave particulars of an operation to be carried out by H.M.S. Furious.

   The Vice-Chief of the Imperial General Staff reported that the enemy's main concentrations remained at Sidi Barrani and in the area around Sollum, with their leading reconnaissance troops up to a line running south from the coast, about 8 miles east of Sidi Barrani. Seventy motor transport vehicles had been reported to be below Sollum escarpment, and the naval bombardment of the latter, together with Halfaya and Sidi Barrani, on the night of the 17th–18th September, had been believed to be effective. The destruction of tracks between Sidi Barrani and Matruh was in progress, and reinforcements had been moved into the area near the latter.

   The Secretary of State for War undertook to enquire from the Commander-in-Chief, Middle East, regarding the best place for the disembarkation of the armoured brigade.

   No further enemy movements had been reported at Kassala, which had been bombed by our aircraft three times on the previous day.

   The War Cabinet took note of the above statements.

2. The War Cabinet were given further information in regard to the movements of the French Fleet. This information is contained in the Secretary’s Standard File of War Cabinet Conclusions.

France.
The French Fleet.
(Previous Reference: W.M. (40) 254th Conclusions, Minute 2.)

Civil Defence.
Precautions against possible use of gas by the enemy.

3. The Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs referred to telegram No. 215 from Sir Samuel Hoare, which stated that there had been a good deal of German propaganda in the Spanish Press relating to our use of fire leaves, and the suggestion that they had a toxic effect. This propaganda might mean that Germany was preparing to use gas against this country.
At the Prime Minister's suggestion the War Cabinet:

Invited the Secretary of State for Home Affairs and Minister of Home Security to review our precautions against the use of gas by the enemy, including the stocks of bleach powder.

United States of America.
Supply of Munitions.
(Previous Reference: W.M. (40) 254th Conclusions, Minute 10.)

4. The Prime Minister said that, in the course of the negotiations with the United States Government in regard to the supply of munitions and the grant of base facilities, the United States Government had said that they wished to refer, in the exchange of correspondence, only to the supply of 50 Destroyers. But they had indicated clearly that we should receive the further 250,000 rifles, 20 motor torpedo-boats, the 150 aircraft on order for Sweden, and 10 large flying boats. He had instructed the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to telephone to Lord Lothian that day, and to explain to him that we regarded ourselves as having been promised these munitions, and that we felt the lack of them very severely. If need be, he (the Prime Minister) would send a personal message to President Roosevelt on the matter. He also attached importance to the rifles being despatched quickly. It had been stated that the Purvis Commission had insisted on re-packing the previous consignments, and had thereby caused considerable delay.

The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs said that he had seen it stated that the United States Government intended to make it a condition of the supply of these 250,000 rifles that 20,000 of them should be handed over to the Eire Government. If it was intended that the Eire Government should receive 20,000 rifles, the matter should be so arranged that the initiative appeared to come from this country.

The War Cabinet took note of these statements.

Air Raid Damage.
(Previous Reference: W.M. (40) 254th Conclusions, Minute 4.)

5. The Home Secretary said that Waterloo, Victoria and London Bridge Stations were now restored to partial working.

The bombs which had fallen on or near the Scottish Office, the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Aircraft Production had caused little damage.

He had visited some of the tube railways to see how far they were being used as air raid shelters, and the character of the persons who took refuge there.

A discussion on shelter policy followed, in which the Prime Minister suggested that tickets might be issued for admission to the large multiple-unit type of domestic shelters. By this means each person would know where he ought to take shelter.

The Home Secretary said that one of the first measures to be taken would be to bring into use, as public shelters at night, basements under warehouses, shops and other commercial buildings.

The Secretary of State for War thought that the photographs in the Press of ruined houses and buildings were giving an exaggerated idea of the general aspect of London in the present time. It was bad propaganda, and it was disturbing to Londoners in the Fighting Services who were serving at a distance from their homes.

The War Cabinet—

(a) Invited the Home Secretary to circulate a Memorandum containing his further recommendations on shelter policy.
Air Raid Warnings.
(Previous Reference: W.M. (40) 253rd Conclusions, Minute 2.)

6. The Home Secretary and the Secretary of State for Air referred to the decision that the "red" warning should not normally be given during hours of daylight in the London area on account of the presence of a single enemy aircraft. The public had not been informed of this change in practice, and would be likely to blame Fighter Command in cases where bombs were dropped although the "red" warning had not been given. The Commissioner of Police for the Metropolis had said that there was strong feeling in two districts of London where bombs had been dropped on the previous day, although no "red" warning had been given.

The Prime Minister said that it was essential to give a lead in the direction of not allowing dislocation of production and of normal activities over wide areas on account of a single aircraft. The decision that the "red" warning should not be given in the London area on account of a single aircraft must be adhered to. For the moment he was opposed to making any public statement on the subject. Later, if need be, the matter could be explained in Parliament.

The Prime Minister also stated that at a Meeting of Ministers held on Monday it had been arranged that weekly returns should be obtained from the principal Departments to show the working hours lost through air raid warnings. These returns should be circulated to all the Departments concerned, in order that each might see how its practice compared with that of others.

The War Cabinet took note of these statements.

The Black-Out.
(Previous Reference: W.M. (40) Conclusions, Minute 2.)

7. The War Cabinet had before them the Report (W.P. (40) 375) of a Committee appointed to review the Black-out position. The Report showed, inter alia:

that certain improvements in strict lighting were technically practicable, including a dual system of centrally controlled street lighting in the centres of towns; that, if these improvements were to be adopted, it would be necessary to ensure that the lights were extinguished before a hostile aircraft arrived within 15 miles, and that this would necessitate a reliable warning of at least 10 minutes.

The Report also recommended that the following preparatory steps should now be taken:

(a) A review should be made of the Air Raid Warning system and the possibility of introducing a supplemental system of localised area warnings examined.

(b) A full scale test should be made of the visibility of different intensities of lighting.

(c) The views of local authorities should be ascertained and they should be invited to prepare schemes for their areas.

(d) Experiments on deception lighting should be continued.

[Paragraph 50 (9).]

After a short discussion the Prime Minister suggested that it was not necessary to reach a final decision that day. Meanwhile the
preparatory steps recommended by the Committee should be put in hand forthwith, together with such other steps as might be required to enable the streets to be cheerfully illuminated in the following November, should that be found possible when the time came without unnecessary risk.

The Home Secretary and the Minister of Health were afraid that many local authorities would be unwilling to run the risks involved in adopting improved street lighting. At any rate, they would not be willing to pay for it, and a new burden might fall upon the Exchequer.

Mr. Rucker said that he did not think that the provision of the necessary equipment would prove a limiting factor, or would take a long time.

The War Cabinet—

Agreed that the necessary preparatory steps—on the lines suggested in paragraph 50 (9) of W.P. (40) 375—should be taken forthwith.

Richmond Terrace, S.W. 1,
September 20, 1940.
CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held in the Cabinet War Room, S.W. 1, on Monday, September 23, 1940, at 5 P.M.

Present:

The Right Hon. WINSTON S. CHURCHILL, M.P., Prime Minister (in the Chair).


The Right Hon. A. GREENWOOD, M.P., Minister without Portfolio.

The Right Hon. VISCOUNT HALIFAX, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

The Right Hon. LORD BEAVERBROOK, Minister of Aircraft Production.

The following were also present:


The Right Hon. Sir ARCHIBALD SINCLAIR, Bt., M.P., Secretary of State for Air.

The Right Hon. Sir ANDREW DUNCAN, M.P., President of the Board of Trade (Item 9).

The Right Hon. ERNEST BEVIN, M.P., Minister of Labour and National Service (Item 9).

The Right Hon. LORD TRYON, First Commissioner of Works (Item 8).

Air Chief Marshal Sir CYRIL L. N. NEWALL, Chief of the Air Staff (Items 1–7).

The Right Hon. LORD LLOYD, Secretary of State for the Colonies (Items 1 and 2).

The Right Hon. ANTHONY EDEN, M.P., Secretary of State for War.

The Right Hon. Sir KINGSLEY WOOD, M.P., Chancellor of the Exchequer (Items 8 and 9).

The Right Hon. A. DUFF COOPER, M.P., Minister of Information.

The Hon. Sir ALEXANDER CADOGAN, Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

Admiral of the Fleet Sir DUDLEY POUND, First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff (Items 1–7).

General Sir JOHN DILL, Chief of the Imperial General Staff (Items 1–7).

Secretariat:

Sir EDWARD BRIDGES.
Major-General Sir HASTINGS ISMAY.
Mr. L. F. BURGIS.
WAR CABINET 256 (40).

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1. The Prime Minister said that the operation “Menace” had begun that morning. At the outset it had appeared that matters were progressing very favourably. Thus the first messages had stated that General de Gaulle’s emissary had been received, and that our aircraft had landed at the aerodromes. Later a message had been received indicating that sporadic and formal resistance was being shown, and that our forces would have to interfere and open fire. The Cumberland had received a hit amidships by a shot from one of the batteries, and was out of action, and one destroyer had been damaged. The operation was now proceeding.

The First Sea Lord in supplementing the above information said that visibility at Dakar that morning had been bad and Resolution and Barham could not see the forts to open fire on them. Admiral Cunningham had decided to test the opposition with our light forces and the Cumberland had been hit. The situation as he saw it depended on the efficiency of the shore batteries, which must be effectively dealt with before any landing was attempted. The Barham and Resolution would have to come within range of the shore guns in order to accomplish this.

Later in the meeting a message was received, timed 1.58 P.M., stating that General de Gaulle was attempting a landing at Rufique under cover of fog. It was also known that General de Gaulle had delivered an ultimatum to the Vichy forces and that they had been ordered to resist.

Reference was made to a statement issued by the German wireless which referred to our having interfered with French ships off the African coast. The Minister of Information urged that a statement should be issued by the British Government before the Germans had time to do so.

The War Cabinet invited the Minister of Information, in consultation with the Foreign Office, to draft a statement regarding operation “Menace” and to submit it to the Prime Minister for approval.

2. The Chief of the Air Staff reported that on the previous day our bombers had attacked the Channel ports and a number of factories well inside Germany.

That morning a number of enemy fighters had crossed the South-East coast. The casualties ascertained at the moment were as follows:

- **Our Own** — 9 aircraft (3 pilots missing and 3 unaccounted for).
- **Enemy** — 10 certain, 5 probable, 3 damaged.

On the 21st September a successful bombing attack had been made on enemy positions at Sidi Barrani.

On the 21st September eight enemy aircraft had attacked Haifa, doing some damage to a power station, a petrol tank and a petrol charging plant.

The First Sea Lord reported that in the last three days we had suffered severe loss by enemy attack on convoys approaching this country from the north-west. In one convoy we had lost 7 ships and in another 4.

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff gave details of the Italian advance on Sidi Barrani the previous week. They had moved in what was described as “hedgehogs,” i.e., columns of several hundred vehicles with tanks, A.T. guns and artillery in
front and on the flanks, and infantry in lorries in the centre. When engaged they had deployed their artillery and tanks, and sometimes infantry, and had advanced slowly in rigid lines. Our artillery had fired on to these massed vehicles at effective range and claimed to have destroyed at least 150, some of them full of troops. Our infantry also had had opportunities of using machine guns effectively. The 25-pdr. gun had received high praise.

Our casualties amounted to 40 personnel, 1 cruiser tank and about one dozen vehicles.

The present situation was that one Blackshirt Division supported by a Libyan Division was consolidating round Sidi Barrani, where the R.A.F. was constantly harassing them. Two Metropolitan Divisions were in the Sollum area and a small force of uncertain composition was thought to be in the Giarabub area. Besides these there were 11 or possibly 12 Divisions in Libya.

The First Lord of the Admiralty said that the Armoured Brigade would reach Egypt that afternoon. This represented a very fine achievement on the part of the merchant ships concerned.

The War Cabinet invited the First Lord of the Admiralty to send the following message on their behalf:

"The War Cabinet, the Army and the other Services send their congratulations to the ships of the Merchant Navy on this fine achievement."

3. The Prime Minister said that a number of indications had been received pointing to the possibility of an attempt at invasion over the week-end. One of these had suggested that invasion would start at 3 P.M. on Sunday, 22nd September.

In the light of the information available, it was for consideration whether our Bomber force should continue operations against the invasion ports, or whether the majority of heavy bombers should, if conditions permitted, deliver an air attack on Berlin.

The Chief of the Air Staff said that the weather was suitable for the despatch of over 100 heavy bombers against Berlin that night. This would leave 45 medium and 5 heavy bombers available for action against the Channel ports. Orders in this sense had already been given.

The War Cabinet agreed that the orders given should stand.

4. In connection with item 2, discussion ensued as to the extent to which aircraft and pilots should be sent to Egypt. The War Cabinet were informed that the despatch of fighter aircraft overseas had been suspended some time back, and that no aircraft were being despatched to the Middle East other than under arrangements authorised some time previously. It was pointed out in discussion that there was a strong case for the despatch to the Middle East of aircraft which could be flown by the experienced R.A.F. pilots in that area who were now flying aircraft of obsolescent types. A number of pilots were also being sent to the Middle East.

The War Cabinet—

Invited the Secretary of State for Air to submit a statement showing the numbers of aircraft (by types) and pilots despatched to the Middle East in August and September, and the numbers it was proposed to despatch in October and November.
Air Raid
Warnings.

Effect on
aircraft
production.
(Previous
Reference:
W.M. (40) 255th
Conclusions,
Minute 6.)

Closing of shops
and banks.

United States of
America.

Supply of
Munitions.
(Previous
Reference:
W.M. (40) 255th
Conclusions,
Minute 4.)

Honours and
Decorations.
(Previous
Reference:
W.M. (40) 252nd
Conclusions,
Minute 2.)

It was understood that, pending consideration of this statement, no further aircraft would be despatched, other than the small consignment the despatch of which during the present week had already been arranged.

5. Reference was made to a statement by Lord Nuffield which had been published in the Sunday papers to the effect that the German attack on our industry had resulted in no material damage. The Chief of the Air Staff suggested that a statement of this kind was likely to attract further attacks on the aircraft industry.

The general view of the War Cabinet was that, while the statement made was perhaps ill-judged, it was far better that any public statements made as to the effects of air attack on our productive capacity should sound a confident note.

The Minister of Aircraft Production said that aircraft production was still suffering severely from interruptions due to air raid warnings. There was an unfortunate tendency on the part of workers in the aircraft industry to stop work on the raid warnings and to hang about outside the factory without going into the shelters.

The Lord Privy Seal said that, while the practice of the Post Office had now been remedied, work still stopped in shops and banks when the sirens sounded.

The Home Secretary said that he had received a deputation from the Retail Traders on this subject. At the outset the big shops had been afraid of being rushed in the event of an air raid, but this no longer presented any trouble. He had not been in touch with the big banks on this subject, but he would look into the matter.

The War Cabinet—

(1) Agreed that every effort must be made to induce workers in aircraft factories and engaged on other war production not to cease work when the "red" warning sounded.

(2) Took note that the Home Secretary would look into the question of the closing of banks during air raids.

6. The Prime Minister read to the War Cabinet copies of two telegrams from Mr. Purvis stating that the United States Government had now agreed to release 250,000 further rifles. Negotiations were proceeding in regard to aircraft and large flying boats.

The War Cabinet took note of this statement.

7. The Prime Minister said that the approval of His Majesty the King had now been obtained to the creation of a George Cross and a George Medal. The George Cross would absorb the Empire Gallantry Medal and could be awarded posthumously.

The Prime Minister read to the War Cabinet the draft of a statement announcing the establishment of the George Cross and the George Medal which it was proposed to publish that night.

The War Cabinet approved this statement.
Evacuation of Government Departments.

8. The War Cabinet had before them a Memorandum by the Lord Privy Seal in regard to the “Grey” move for the evacuation of Government Departments from London (W.P. (G.) (40) 242).

The Lord Privy Seal said that 30,000 staff had already left London as part of the “Grey” move, but very few had left in recent months. The move ought now to proceed steadily, in order to make more elbow-room in London. At present, if the accommodation occupied by one of the big Departments were to be knocked out, it would be difficult to find alternative accommodation. It was important that the move should be carried out in an orderly way, but without creating an impression that the Government was leaving London.

The First Commissioner of Works said that the conditions of work of staffs evacuated from London were now far more favourable than the conditions in London itself.

The War Cabinet—

(1) Approved generally the recommendations summarised in paragraph 7 (a), (b) and (c) of the Lord Privy Seal’s Memorandum:

(2) Invited the Minister of Information to explain to the Press that the moves contemplated represented no more than an extension of the process, already begun, of thinning out the Government staffs in London, and to invite them to make no reference to the movement in the Press.

Air Raids.

9. The War Cabinet had before them a Memorandum by the Chancellor of the Exchequer (W.P. (G.) (40) 239), stating that pressure was developing on employers in certain industries, particularly those in which the employees were asked to work under air raid conditions, to effect insurances for the benefit of their work-people against death or injury from enemy action. The question arose whether such insurances would reckon as an expense in computing the employers’ liability to Excess Profits Tax, in which case they would be effected at the cost of the Exchequer.

Further, if such insurances became common in, for example, the aircraft industry, the demand for insurance would spread to A.R.P. workers and to employees in other industries which could not bear the cost.

A situation might arise in which the State would be bearing the whole cost of this insurance, in addition to its own compensation scheme. The Chancellor of the Exchequer therefore proposed that this form of insurance should be stopped.

In discussion, it was explained that the State scheme of compensation for personal injury in air raids applied to all persons gainfully employed, and to persons engaged in Civil Defence services, and was based on the compensation payable to a private soldier in the Army.

The question was raised whether the State scheme of compensation should be so limited, or whether it should be of general application.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer explained that his objection was not to private individuals taking out insurances on their own account, but to Insurance Companies issuing policies to employers in respect of large blocks of their employees.

The Minister of Labour and National Service doubted whether the present scale of compensation, based on that payable to a private soldier, was adequate, particularly in regard to men who might be earning as much as £5 a week. He thought that consideration should be given to a more attractive scheme, to which the workers
might be asked to pay contributions, possibly as part of the general State insurance scheme.

The Prime Minister suggested that, on the analogy of the scheme agreed in respect of damage to property, compensation for personal injury should be payable by the State in respect of all persons injured, on a modest scale. Persons desiring to be insured against personal injury in air raids in excess of this scale should be asked to pay premiums. The rate of premium, however, should be increased in respect of insurances effected above a certain limit.

The War Cabinet—

1) Deferred a final decision on this matter, but authorised the Chancellor of the Exchequer as an interim measure to put a stop to the type of insurance policy outlined in his Paper.

2) Invited a Committee comprising—

- The Lord Privy Seal (Chairman),
- The Minister without Portfolio,
- The Chancellor of the Exchequer,
- The Home Secretary,
- The President of the Board of Trade, and
- The Minister of Labour—

...to consider the question of compensation for personal injury in air raids, and to report to the War Cabinet on Friday, the 27th September.

It should be an instruction to this Committee to relate compensation for personal injury to the scheme of compensation for damage to property in air raids; and to consider whether the scheme for compensation for personal injury could be made of general application.

Richmond Terrace, S.W. 1,
September 23, 1940.
CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held in the Cabinet War Room, S.W. 1, on Tuesday, September 24, 1940, at 12 noon.

Present:
The Right Hon. WINSTON S. CHURCHILL, M.P., Prime Minister (in the Chair).
The Right Hon. A. GREENWOOD, M.P., Minister without Portfolio.

The following were also present:
The Right Hon. LORD LLOYD, Secretary of State for the Colonies (Items 1 and 2).
The Right Hon. ANTHONY EDEN, M.P., Secretary of State for War.
The Right Hon. Sir KINGSLEY WOOD, M.P., Chancellor of the Exchequer (Items 8 and 9).
The Right Hon. A. DUFF COOPER, M.P., Minister of Information.
Air Chief Marshal Sir CYRIL L. N. NEWALL, Chief of the Air Staff.

General Sir JOHN DILL, Chief of the Imperial General Staff.

Secretariat.
Sir EDWARD BRIDGES.
Major-General Sir HASTINGS ISMAY.
Mr. L. F. BURGIS.
**WAR CABINET 287 (40).**

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1. The First Sea Lord reported that the visibility at Dakar on the previous day had not exceeded two miles and the Cumberland had engaged the shore batteries at 4,000 yards. This explained the damage which she had received. General de Gaulle's emissary had landed at about 7:30 on the previous morning, but his proposals had been rejected and he had returned wounded, having encountered resolute opposition. About 2 P.M. General de Gaulle had attempted a landing at Rufisque, but owing to fog it had been impossible to carry out the operation before dark. The forces had therefore been withdrawn with the intention of resuming operations that morning. An ultimatum expiring at that time had been sent to the Dakar authorities. Later in the meeting the War Cabinet was informed that a French submarine had attacked the battle fleet, and, on being depth-charged, had surfaced and shown the white flag.

The First Sea Lord drew the attention of the War Cabinet to a communiqué which had been received from General de Gaulle in regard to the operations at Dakar during the previous day, and which he asked should be published. The last sentence of this communiqué referred to the withdrawal of General de Gaulle's troops and ships owing to his not wishing to be a party to a fight between Frenchmen. This (which was no doubt intended for French ears) might easily give an impression that the operations were at an end. The question was raised whether the communiqué should be published in the English Papers. It was pointed out that the communiqué had been telegraphed en clair and had probably already appeared in the American newspapers. The attention of the War Cabinet was also called to a statement issued by the Vichy Government to the effect that the British had attempted, after 1 A.M. that morning, a series of landings which had been repulsed with heavy losses.

The War Cabinet—

Invited the Minister of Information to issue to the Press the communiqué prepared by General de Gaulle, accompanied by a statement that there was no truth in the reports emanating from Vichy regarding attempted British landings.

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs read to the War Cabinet a telegram from Washington (No. 2552) which showed that President Roosevelt approved of the Dakar operation, and was prepared to exercise his influence with the Vichy Government to prevent them from declaring war. The Foreign Secretary also read the reply sent by the Prime Minister.

The War Cabinet took note of this statement.

2. The Chief of the Air Staff reported that the air casualties for the previous day had been as follows:

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<td><strong>Our Own</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>11 machines</td>
<td>(8 pilots safe)</td>
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<td><strong>Enemy</strong></td>
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<td>12 certain</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 probable</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6 damaged</td>
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Air Operations: attack on Berlin.

The previous night 193 bombers had taken part in operations; 120 had been despatched to Berlin and 60 to the Channel ports. Of those sent to Berlin 75 per cent. had reached the target and successful results had been obtained on various gasworks, power stations and other targets in the Berlin area. Our losses had
amassed to one heavy bomber manned by Czechs and one heavy bomber manned by British. Another of our bombers had crashed but the crew was safe.

During the previous five nights our bombers had taken part in 683 "sorties" with a loss of only 4 machines including the above casualties.

The First Sea Lord reported that the Submarine *Tuna* had sunk a merchant vessel of 8,000 tons off Bordeaux.

Two hours ago it had been reported that 7 German minesweepers were sweeping in the Channel 9 miles W.S.W. of Dover. A medium bomber force with a fighter escort had been ordered to attack.

A ship of 550 tons had been sunk off Cromer on the previous night by an E-boat.

It was now reported that a further ship had been sunk in the in coming convoy bound for the Clyde which had suffered so heavily.

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff said that there was nothing of importance to record.

Enemy air attacks had been made against Alexandria and Mersa Matruh harbour and station. It was believed that some damage had been done to the station.

In the raid on Haifa on the 21st September, Arab property had suffered extensive damage, but it was not thought that the hits to the refinery would seriously interfere with refining.

The War Cabinet took note of these statements.

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### 3. The Secretary of State for Home Affairs said that on the previous day the main enemy activity had been directed against London, and had been rather more intense than on recent nights. The main force of the attack had been directed against communications, with the result that Liverpool Street Station and the Brighton line at Wandsworth Common were blocked. Traffic at Euston was interfered with by a U.X.B. The northern outfall sewer had again been damaged at Abbey Mills, and the southern outfall had also been hit. Full details were not yet available. Direct hits had been sustained by several shelters, and the casualties had been rather heavier than on the preceding two or three nights.

The Prime Minister referred to reports issued by the Germans that they had now dropped 22,000 tons of bombs on this country. It would be worth while for the Air Staff to calculate whether this statement was near the mark. It seemed clear that the air attack on this country had been most ineffectual in relation to the weight of the attack delivered.

The War Cabinet—

Took note of these statements, and invited the Chief of the Air Staff to make an estimate, on the lines suggested by the Prime Minister, as to the weight of air attack delivered against this country.

---

### 4. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs said that the War Cabinet would have seen the many telegrams about the position in Indo-China. Japanese forces had entered Indo-China and had established themselves. It would seem that the Japanese had made an agreement with the French authorities which would enable them to use aerodromes, and to station land forces in Indo-China. He was preparing a Paper on this subject, which he would submit to the War Cabinet in a day or so.

The War Cabinet took note of this statement.
5. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs said that in the various requests we had made to the United States for munitions he had seen no reference to anti-aircraft guns. Was this worth examining?

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff said that General Strong had mentioned this matter to him on his recent visit. He thought that the United States Government had no anti-aircraft guns immediately available which would be of value to us, but that some might be available early in 1941.

The War Cabinet—
Invited the Secretary of State for War to enquire further into this suggestion.

6. The Prime Minister referred to the sinking of the City of Benares with the loss of a number of women and children. He was anxious that the scheme for evacuating children overseas should now be discontinued.

The Secretary of State for Home Affairs said that he had asked the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Dominions to convene a meeting of the Council of the Children’s Overseas Reception Scheme that day and to ascertain their views. He gathered that there was strong feeling against a complete discontinuance of the scheme.

The First Lord of the Admiralty referred to an article in the Evening News the previous night attacking the Government in connection with this scheme. He hoped it would not be necessary to make a public statement on the additional risks to which ships were now exposed in the North-Western Approaches. He also mentioned that a fast ship with a number of children on board was due to leave that night for South Africa.

The War Cabinet—
Invited the Home Secretary to submit a report to the War Cabinet on the whole matter at an early date. In the meantime, so far as practicable, steps should be taken to postpone further sailings of children under the scheme.

7. The War Cabinet had before them a Memorandum by the Secretary of State for War (W.P. (40) 379).

The Secretary of State for War said that there were 850 prisoners of war in this country. The number was being added to at the rate of about 100 a week. He would like to send up to 1,000 prisoners to Newfoundland, but before doing so he sought the specific approval of the War Cabinet to the policy involved.

The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs said that he had no doubt that the Newfoundland Government, when approached, would agree to this request. There might, however, be some difficulty in regard to providing guards, and some time would be necessary to complete the construction of the camp.

The War Cabinet—
Agreed in principle with the policy of sending prisoners of war overseas, and that the Newfoundland Government should be asked to accept 1,000 if the camp could be completed before the winter set in.
Machine Tools.
Arrangements for purchase in the United States of America.

8. The War Cabinet had before them two Memoranda by the Minister of Supply (W.P. (G.) (40) 240 and 243).

In the former Memorandum the Minister explained that, as a result of action taken by the United States Defence Advisory Committee, the exports of machine tools from America had been put under licence, and we were now required to justify each purchase. Unless the United States Government could be persuaded to take a more favourable view of our requirements, and to release the machine tools on order by us in the States, our munitions programme might suffer a serious setback.

The second Memorandum by the Minister covered a telegram, dated the 20th September, from Mr. Purvis, setting out the terms of a settlement reached with the Defence Advisory Committee and the Navy and Army authorities.

The view generally expressed was that the terms of this settlement were very favourable, and that Mr. Purvis was to be congratulated on reaching so satisfactory a settlement.

The War Cabinet took note of the settlement reached.

Labour.

9. In connection with the preceding Minute, the Prime Minister said that the Minister of Labour was anxious to get 3,000 machine tools for the Government training centres. The Minister represented that, unless he could get these machine tools, it would not be possible to provide the trained men required to fulfil the defence programme.

In discussion the Minister of Aircraft Production suggested that, as a general rule, all the machine tools (especially new machine tools) which could be obtained, should be sent to the factories and used for current production. He deprecated putting machine tools into training centres at this juncture, more especially since in his view training should be carried out in the factories.

On the other hand it was urged that full use was not being made of the existing machine tools on account of the shortage of skilled labour; and that while, for the most part, training should be carried out in factories, there was a field for training in the Ministry of Labour centres and by local education authorities.

The general view of the War Cabinet was that it was necessary to maintain a due balance between the immediate needs of the production programme and our long-term requirements.

The War Cabinet—

Invited the Minister without Portfolio to adjust the demands made by the Minister of Labour for machine tools for Government training establishments, in competition with other demands, on the understanding that the bias should be in favour of training in factories and that as far as possible the Minister of Labour’s requirements should be met by the provision of second-hand tools.

*Richmond Terrace, S.W. 1,*

*September 24, 1940.*
CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held in the Cabinet War
Room, S.W. 1, on Wednesday, September 25, 1940, at 11:30 A.M.

Present:
The Right Hon. WINSTON S. CHURCHILL, M.P., Prime Minister (in the Chair).  
The Right Hon. VISCOUNT HALIFAX, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.  
The Right Hon. A. GREENWOOD, M.P., Minister without Portfolio.  

The following were also present:
The Right Hon. Sir JOHN ANDERSON, M.P., Secretary of State for the Home Department and Minister of Home Security (Item 5).  
The Right Hon. Sir ARCHIBALD SINCLAIR, Bt., M.P., Secretary of State for Air.  
The Right Hon. A. DUFF COOPER, M.P., Minister of Information.  
Admiral of the Fleet Sir DUDLEY POUND, First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff.  
The Right Hon. LORD LLOYD, Secretary of State for the Colonies.  
The Right Hon. ANTHONY EDEN, M.P., Secretary of State for War.  
The Right Hon. HERWALD RAMS-SINCLAIR, Bt., President of the Board of Education (Item 3).  
Air Chief Marshal Sir CYRIL L. N. NEWALL, Chief of the Air Staff.  
General Sir JOHN DILL, Chief of the Imperial General Staff.  

Secretariat.
Sir EDWARD BRIDGES.  
Major-General Sir HASTINGS ISMAY.  
Colonel L. C. HOLLIS, R.M.  
Mr. L. F. BURGIS.
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Naval, Military and Air Operations.

(Previous Reference: W.M. (40) 257th Conclusions, Minute 2.)

Air operations: Home Commands.

Naval operations: Gibraltar.

Military operations: Operation "Menace."

(Previous Reference: W.M. (40) 257th Conclusions, Minute 1.)

Military Training. University Students.

(Previous Reference: W.M. (40) "X" 231st Conclusions, Minute 2.)

1. The Chief of the Air Staff reported that on the previous day two major attacks had been made over Kent and the Thames Estuary. The first had involved approximately 200 enemy aircraft, some of which had attacked objectives at Tilbury and Gravesend, and the second about 160.

Casualties for the previous day had been:

**Our own**
- 5 aircraft (3 pilots saved).

**Enemy**
- 7 certain,
- 8 probable,
- 13 damaged.

On the previous day our aircraft had attacked 5 enemy mine-sweepers off Dover. Two had received direct hits in addition to several near misses.

128 of our aircraft had carried out attacks on the previous night. The main attack had been on the French ports, but 8 machines had attacked Berlin. One of our bombers was missing and four had crashed, some of the crews being saved.

Bomining operations had been undertaken from Egypt, Sudan, Kenya and Aden. Gibraltar had been attacked by 25 aircraft (believed to be French), and 150 bombs dropped.

The First Sea Lord reported that the bombing of Gibraltar on the previous day had caused little damage to harbour facilities and none to ships.

H.M.S. Erebus had been unsuccessfully attacked by "E"-boats east of Lowestoft the previous night.

H.M. Submarine Cachalot had sunk a U-boat south-west of Ushant on the previous day.

H.M. Submarine Luna had attacked and sunk a large merchant vessel south of Lorient early the previous morning.

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff said that he had nothing to report.

The War Cabinet took note of the above statements.

2. The War Cabinet were given the latest information in regard to this Operation.

The discussion and Conclusions reached are recorded in the Secretary’s Standard File of War Cabinet Conclusions.

3. The War Cabinet had before them a Memorandum by the Secretary of State for War (W.P. (G.) (40) 244) containing an announcement which he proposed to make relating to the question of compulsory military training for students.

The Secretary of State for Air said that it was proposed to re-form the University Air Squadrons, and that he would like to suggest additions to the proposed announcement to make it clear that Air training would be included within the scope of the military training to be provided at Universities.

The President of the Board of Education welcomed the proposed announcement, which had been agreed with the Universities.
The War Cabinet—

Approved the proposed announcement subject to such amendments as might be agreed between the Secretaries of State for War and Air, to meet the point raised at “X.”

Royal Messages of Condolence.

(Previous Reference: W.M. (40) 244th Conclusions, Minute 3.)

4. The War Cabinet had before them a Memorandum from the Committee on the Grant of Honours, &c., in Time of War, on the proposed extension of the issue of the Royal Message of Condolence (W.P. (G.) (40) 245).

The War Cabinet—

Agreed that a recommendation should be made to The King that an expression of condolence from Their Majesties should be sent to the next-of-kin of all civilians killed by enemy action, and that the Message should be sent on Home Office (or Scottish Office) notepaper, as follows:

"The Home Secretary (or Secretary of State for Scotland) has been commanded by The King to convey to you an expression of Their Majesties' sympathy in your great loss."

Air Raid Damage.

(Previous Reference: W.M. (40) 257th Conclusions, Minute 3.)

5. The Secretary of State for Home Affairs said that the enemy air attack on the previous night had been heavier than usual, and had been mainly directed against the West End. The East End had suffered very little. Casualties were believed to be relatively slight, but considerable damage had been done. The Tottenham Court Road area had suffered severely. The new Police Station at Savile Row had been badly knocked about. There had been a shower of incendiaries, which had for the most part been quickly put out, but there had been considerable fires at Maple's and Oetzmann's furniture shops.

Railway communications had suffered very severely, and Waterloo Station was again out of action. The roof of St. Margaret's, Westminster, had been set on fire, and the balloon from the Horse Guards Parade had broken loose and had done some damage to the Houses of Parliament.

Outside the London area, damage had been comparatively slight.

The War Cabinet took note of this statement.

Richmond Terrace, S.W. 1,
September 25, 1940.
SECRET.
W.M. (40)
259th Conclusions.

TO BE KEPT UNDER LOCK AND KEY.
It is requested that special care may be taken to
ensure the secrecy of this document.

WAR CABINET 259 (40).

CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held in the Cabinet War
Room, S.W. 1, on Thursday, September 26, 1940, at 12 NOON.

Present:
The Right Hon. WINSTON S. CHURCHILL, M.P., Prime Minister (in the Chair).
The Right Hon. VISCOUNT HALIFAX, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.
The Right Hon. A. GREENWOOD, M.P., Minister without Portfolio.

The following were also present:
The Right Hon. LORD LLOYD, Secretary of State for the Colonies (Items 1 and 2).
The Right Hon. ANTHONY EDEN, M.P., Secretary of State for War.
The Right Hon. A. DUFF COOPER, M.P., Minister of Information.
Admiral of the Fleet SIR DUDLEY POUND, First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff.
The Right Hon. VISCOUNT CALDECOTE, M.P., Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs.
The Right Hon. SIR ARCHIBALD SINCLAIR, Bt., M.P., Secretary of State for Air.
Air Chief Marshal SIR CYRIL L. N. NEWALL, Chief of the Air Staff.
General SIR JOHN DILL, Chief of the Imperial General Staff.

Secretariat.
Sir EDWARD BRIDGES.
Major-General SIR HASTINGS ISMAI.
Mr. W. D. WILKINSON.
Mr. L. F. BURGIS.
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Naval, Military and Air Operations.

The Chief of the Air Staff reported that on the previous day enemy action had consisted of three main attacks—on Filton, Portland and Plymouth. The attack on the Bristol Company's works at Filton had been made by 27 bombers escorted by fighters, and considerable damage had been done to the works, and casualties amongst the staff had been heavy.

The Prime Minister suggested that Lord Chatfield should be invited to visit Filton to enquire whether there had been any outstanding examples of courage, which should be rewarded. The attacks on Portland and Plymouth had been unsuccessful. Casualties for the previous day had been:

Our own—
4 aircraft (2 pilots safe).

Enemy—
26 certain.
8 probable.
12 damaged.

The previous night 116 aircraft had been despatched to attack:

(i) shipping and barges in Channel ports—68 aircraft.
(ii) marshalling yards—13 aircraft.
(iii) Gneisenau, Scharnhorst, and Lutzow in Kiel—18 aircraft.
(iv) Berlin and Klingen—17 aircraft.

The weather had not been good, but preliminary reports indicated that operations against Berlin and Kiel had been successful. One of our aircraft had crashed, the crew being saved. All the rest had returned safely.

A Hudson aircraft had attacked three merchant vessels off Terschelling on the previous day, and the leading vessel had last been seen sinking by the stern. A Blenheim had shot down a Dornier 18 off Brest.

The Prime Minister mentioned that he had received a letter from Lord Trenchard—which he had referred to the Chiefs of Staffs—in which he deplored that our bombers should be taken off attacking military objectives in Germany in order to bomb the invasion ports. The Prime Minister thought, however, that we should be assuming a great responsibility if we allowed invasion concentrations to accumulate in the Channel ports without taking action against them. But when the weather in the Channel was unfavourable for invasion, it might be possible to divert more aircraft to targets in Germany.

The First Sea Lord reported that destroyers had again successfully attacked Sidi Barrani early on the morning of the 25th September. The Anthony had reported that she had on board forty-six survivors, including six children, from the City of Benares.

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff reported that enemy troop concentrations had been reported 10 miles west of Tessaou (south of Kassala). Two prisoners had been captured at Maddelenia.

The Prime Minister said that he understood that the last of the armoured units which had recently been sent to Egypt would not be completely ready to go into action until the 14th October. He asked the Chief of the Imperial General Staff to report the reasons for the long period taken in getting all these units into action.

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Abyssinia.

The Secretary of State for War reported that promising news had been received from Sandford's Column, which had penetrated some way into Abyssinia. So far they had met no Italians, and their operations had proceeded satisfactorily. No recent news had been received from the second Column, which was penetrating Abyssinia north of Lake Tsana.

The War Cabinet took note of the above statements.

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The War Cabinet were given the latest information in regard to Operation "Menace." The discussion and conclusions reached are recorded in the Secretary's Standard File of War Cabinet Conclusions.

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The attention of the War Cabinet was drawn to telegram No. 778 from Madrid. According to the Spanish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Herr von Ribbentrop had gone to Rome in answer to an urgent appeal from Signor Mussolini for German air help, which had been agreed to. The War Cabinet were informed that, according to the best information available, while some Italian units (both fighters and bombers) had gone to Germany, certain German dive-bombing units had gone to Libya. The object of this arrangement, which was not very obvious, might be either to cement the Axis partnership or to make the German help palatable to Italian pride.

The War Cabinet took note of this statement.

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The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs said that he would shortly be bringing before the War Cabinet papers dealing with the Burma Road and with the doubtful prospects of reaching a general settlement in the Far East.

---

The First Sea Lord said that the question had arisen whether action should proceed in regard to the despatch of a consignment of Brewster aircraft to the Commander-in-Chief, Mediterranean.

The War Cabinet—

Agreed to discuss the despatch of aircraft overseas on the following day.

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The Secretary of State for Home Affairs said that by day there had been little enemy activity over this country with the exception of the three attacks reported by the Chief of the Air Staff. By night, while bombs had been dropped at random over the country, most of the enemy activity had been directed against London, mainly against the Northern suburbs and the areas just South of the River. The casualties in the London area were about 50 killed (probably more than half of them in Hendon) and 370 injured. About 13 parachute mines had been dropped, some of which had exploded in the air. The position of the railways, taken as a whole, had steadily improved in the last few days.

The War Cabinet took note of this statement.
Whitehall.

7. The War Cabinet had before them a Report by the Chiefs of Staff proposing certain measures for the air defence of Whitehall (W.P. (40) 383). These proposals were put before the War Cabinet lest provision of these defences should give rise to embarrassing demands from other localities. The War Cabinet took the view that the measures proposed were no more than a reasonable defence of the centre of Government, and approved the Chiefs of Staff's suggestions.

India.

8. The War Cabinet took note of a Memorandum by the Chiefs of Staff (W.P. (40) 380).

Richmond Terrace, S.W. 1,
September 26, 1940.
CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held in the Cabinet War Room, S.W. 1, on Friday, September 27, 1940, at 11:30 A.M.

Present:
The Right Hon. WINSTON S. CHURCHILL, M.P., Prime Minister (in the Chair).
The Right Hon. A. GREENWOOD, M.P., Minister without Portfolio.

The following were also present:
The Right Hon. Sir KINGSLEY WOOD, M.P., Chancellor of the Exchequer (Item 10).
The Right Hon. VISCOUNT CALDECOTE, Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs.
The Right Hon. Sir ARCHIBALD SINCLAIR, Bt., M.P., Secretary of State for Air.
Air Chief Marshal Sir CYRIL L. N. NEWALL, Chief of the Air Staff.

General Sir JOHN DILL, Chief of the Imperial General Staff.

Secretariat.
Sir EDWARD BRIDGES.
Major-General Sir HASTINGS ISMAY.
Mr. W. D. WILKINSON.
Mr. L. F. BURGIS.

[21781—3]
# WAR CABINET 260 (40).

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Naval, Military and Air Operations.

(Previous Reference: W.M. (40) 259th Conclusions, Minute 1.)

Air Operations:

Home Commands.

Middle East.

Naval Operations:

Arrival of United States Destroyers.

Enemy attacks on Shipping.

Military Operations:

Egypt.

Sudan.

Malta.

Aircraft Production.

Attack on Vickers Super Marine Works, September 26, 1940.

1. The Chief of the Air Staff reported that on the previous day there had been a great deal of enemy activity off the Dutch coast and in the Straits of Dover, but until the late afternoon, it had been confined to reconnaissance. In the late afternoon a heavy attack amounting to about 100 aircraft had developed against the Isle of Wight and Southampton area in which Vickers Super Marine Works had been severely damaged. At about the same time 25 enemy aircraft from the Bay of Biscay direction had flown up St. George's Channel, and attacked Crewe, where the damage had been slight.

The casualties on the previous day had been:

Our Own—

10 machines (7 pilots safe).

Enemy—

32 certain.

10 probable.

10 damaged.

On the previous night between 70 and 80 of our aircraft had attacked the Channel Ports, the Dortmund-Emms Canal and enemy warships at Kiel. One stick of bombs had straddled the Basin at Kiel and one bomb was believed to have burst on the Scharnhorst.

Our losses had been one heavy bomber missing and two crashed, but the crew of the latter had been saved.

On the 25th September Tobruk had been bombed by 27 aircraft with good results. A fuel installation south of Assab, had been attacked.

The First Sea Lord reported that four shells had been fired at Dover on the previous afternoon.

Air reconnaissance had reported on the previous afternoon two M.V.'s of 3,000 tons and four small M.V.'s South-West of Guernsey steering North-West at 12 knots.

Five of the destroyers obtained from the United States of America had arrived at Belfast.

The Stratford (British, 4,753 tons), Askentian (British, 4,917 tons) and Port Denison (British, 8,643 tons) had been torpedoed.

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff said that reconnaissance had reported the enemy digging in at the foot of the escarpment in Bir Sofafi area 20 miles south of Buq Buq.

Two or three enemy colonial battalions had been reported on the frontier 21 miles south of Kassala and a large daily supply column suggested the formation of forward dumps in this area.

Eight enemy aircraft had flown over Malta on the 25th instant. One had been shot down and probably a second. In raids on the 15th and the 17th instant German aircraft had dropped 32 unexploded bombs with German electric Rheinmetal fuses.

The War Cabinet took note of the above statements.

2. The Minister of Aircraft Production said that the damage to the Vickers Super Marine Works (Item 1) had been severe, but he could not as yet give details.

The Prime Minister said that for the week ending the 21st September the number of aircraft repaired and new aircraft produced by the Ministry of Aircraft Production was nearly 1.5 times the number of machines that had been destroyed during that week. The output in new construction and repairs had also shown an increase on the output of the preceding week, which had been
very satisfactory. He was sure that the War Cabinet would wish to congratulate the Minister of Aircraft Production on this fine achievement.

The War Cabinet warmly endorsed this view.

3. The First Sea Lord reported that the following casualties had been inflicted on the French at Dakar:

- Submarines: 2 sunk, 1 severely damaged by gun-fire and 1 had received two near misses.
- Destroyers: 2 Fantasque class and 1 unknown class had been burnt out and beached.
- Cruisers: 1 possible hit on "Gloire" class.
- Richelieu: 2 probable 15-inch hits and 2 near misses from 250 lbs. S.A.P. bombs.

H.M.S. Cornwall had parted company with Primauget and Tarn on the morning of the 26th, having received their promise to proceed to Casablanca. H.M.S. Resolution was in tow and expected at Freetown within the next 48 hours.

The Consul-General at Tangier had reported that 12 submarines, with an adequate supply of torpedoes, had left Casablanca on the 23rd instant to take action against the British squadron at Dakar.

The Prime Minister drew attention to telegram No. 784 from Madrid. According to the Spanish Minister for Foreign Affairs, M. Laval had asked the Spanish Government to allow the flight of French aeroplanes over Spanish and Moroccan territory for attack on Gibraltar. This request had been refused. M. Laval had also asked the German Government to take out of Toulon at once the Strasbourg, 3 10,000 tons cruisers, 3 light cruisers, 4 destroyers and 12 submarines, presumably for the purpose of attacking the British Fleet.

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs thought that this telegram related to the condition of affairs before our withdrawal from Dakar.

The War Cabinet took note of this statement.

4. The First Lord of the Admiralty said that three French merchant vessels were on their way to Jibuti (two from Madagascar and one from Saigon); and others were on their way from Martinique to Casablanca. He asked whether the orders given for the interception of these vessels still held good; or whether they should be suspended to avoid a policy of pinpricks.

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs said that he hoped to circulate a Paper during the week-end which raised the general question of the policy to be pursued towards the Vichy Government. In the meantime he thought it would be difficult to recast our present policy towards the French Colonies which might be summarised as "join de Gaulle or starve." He saw no reason for changing our policy in regard to the particular ships mentioned by the First Lord and he did not think that their interception would excite any violent reaction from the French.

The War Cabinet—

Agreed that orders given for the interception of the French ships referred to by the First Lord of the Admiralty should stand.
5. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs drew attention to the following reports:

Our Ambassador at Madrid reported that the Germans were now beginning in Spain an intensive campaign of provocation against us. We should exercise all patience, as the campaign was regarded by the Ambassador's informant as a sign of weakness rather than strength (telegram No. 776 from Madrid).

The position was obscure, but it appeared that the Japanese were moving in forces for the occupation of Indo-China peacefully.

A telegram had been received from Lord Lothian forwarding a request from the United States Government for Observers to accompany our troops in Egypt. It would be helpful if this request could be acceded to.

The Prime Minister reported that the German wireless had just announced that a Three-Power Pact had been signed in Berlin between Herr von Ribbentrop, Count Ciano and the Japanese Ambassador, to create a new order in Asia and Europe. A significant point of the Pact was that the three Powers would help each other if attacked by any Power not taking part in this war or in the Sino-Japanese war. The Pact, therefore, seemed to be directed against the United States of America.

The view generally expressed was that the Pact, which would probably anger the United States of America, left matters very much as they were, and did not affect the general situation. If anything, it was likely to accelerate the entry of the United States into the war. There was no support in the War Cabinet for the view, sometimes advanced, that the United States of America could lend us more help by staying out of the war.

The Prime Minister referred to telegram No. 2107 from Washington referring to a statement made by the President in conversation with our Ambassador, as to certain action in the event of Portugal being taken over by Germany.

The Foreign Secretary said that he proposed to let President Roosevelt know what we had in mind in this contingency.

The War Cabinet took note of this statement.

6. The Home Secretary said that he had underestimated the number of persons killed in air raids in London area on the 25th September. The figure was now put at 180; the figure for the 26th September would in all probability be similar.

London and Liverpool had been the enemy’s chief objectives during the preceding 24 hours. In London the electricity situation was good. The gas situation was unsatisfactory, as there was no supply over a considerable area. The railway services to King’s Cross, Waterloo and Marylebone, on the Bakerloo tube and on parts of the Underground system, had been brought to a stop, but the position generally was being restored.

The situation in Liverpool was much more favourable than the first reports had indicated. 90 per cent. of the port was available for shipping. No ships had been seriously damaged, and none of the lock gates or bridges in the docks had been hit. The local
pride of the Liverpool people was suffering owing to their being described in the communiqués as “a North-West coastal town.”

The Secretary of State for Air said that the larger towns would be mentioned by name in future communiqués, where it was certain that the Germans must know what town they had attacked. The air defences of Liverpool (like those of all other areas) were not up to scale, but further guns were being made available. It was also proposed to move an additional squadron to a station where it could take part in the defence of Merseyside.

The War Cabinet took note of the above statements.

7. The War Cabinet had before them the following Memoranda:—

By the Minister of Aircraft Production (W.P. (40) 386).
By the Secretary of State for War, as Chairman of the Ministerial Committee on Military Policy in the Middle East (W.P. (40) 387).
By the Secretary of State for Air (W.P. (40) 388).

In discussion the following points were made:—

(i) The Chief of the Air Staff said that he naturally wanted more aircraft to be made available for the Battle of Britain. But the limited number of aircraft which it was proposed to send to the Middle East would have an effect in that area out of all proportion to the loss occasioned by their withdrawal from this country. If the aircraft due to be despatched in October were to be sent according to programme, they ought to be packed now.

(ii) The First Sea Lord said that the arrival of additional modern fighters might be decisive, if there were any danger of the Fleet having to leave Alexandria, owing to dive bombing attacks. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff also favoured the despatch of the aircraft to the Middle East.

(iii) The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs thought that on balance it would be wrong to stop the steady flow of modern aircraft to the Middle East shown in W.P. (40) 388. The consequences of a bad setback in the Middle East might be very serious.

(iv) The Lord Privy Seal and the Minister without Portfolio expressed general agreement with these views.

(v) The Secretary of State for Air gave figures of the Hurricanes now available in this country which showed a considerable improvement on the position on the 1st September. He also gave figures showing our great numerical inferiority in fighters in the Middle East.

(vi) The Minister of Aircraft Production agreed that the position as regards fighters available in this country had considerably improved since the 1st September. Nevertheless he was strongly opposed to further withdrawals of either aircraft or pilots. The Battle of Britain was the only battle that counted.

(vii) The Prime Minister recommended that the situation should be kept constantly under review. The balance of argument was in favour of despatching from this country for the Middle East the aircraft shown in W.P. (40) 388 as awaiting despatch during the rest of September, and during October. In order that the programme of shipments should not be impeded, the packing of these aircraft should proceed immediately.
The question of the despatch of aircraft to the Middle East in November should be brought before the War Cabinet for decision in three weeks' time.

The War Cabinet—

(i) Approved the withdrawal from this country of the aircraft shown in W.P. (40) 388 as earmarked for despatch to the Middle East during the remainder of September, 1940, and October, 1940.

(ii) Deferred for three weeks a decision on the despatch of further aircraft to the Middle East during November, 1940.

(iii) Agreed that the despatch of the Brewster aircraft now being consigned to the Middle East by the Admiralty, should proceed.

[The Minister of Aircraft Production asked that his dissent from conclusions (i) and (ii) should be recorded.]

8. In connection with the discussion on Minute 7, the Secretary of State for War said that he would like to see a programme drawn up to show what forces and equipment we proposed to send to the Middle East month by month. This programme should be sent to the Commander-in-Chief, Middle East, who should be asked to draw up a plan of campaign related to this programme. The War Cabinet ought to be informed of this plan of campaign, and it might possibly be convenient that someone should go out from this country to the Middle East.

It would, of course, be necessary to consider the situation from month to month, in order to decide whether the situation permitted of the despatch of forces and equipment on the basis of the programme drawn up.

General agreement was expressed with this view.

In this connection, reference was made to the question of the despatch of further troops from this country to the Middle East. This turned, in part, on the likelihood of an attempt at invasion, and in part on the sailing dates of future convoys from this country to the Middle East.

The War Cabinet—

Agreed that this matter should be further discussed by the Prime Minister with the Ministers concerned.

9. The War Cabinet had before them a Memorandum by the Secretary of State for the Colonies as to the requirements of the United States for base facilities at Bermuda (W.P. (40) 385).

These requirements, as stated to the Governor of Bermuda, were far in excess of anything previously contemplated by us, and were open to objection on several grounds.

The Secretary of State for the Colonies proposed that, in view of the strong feeling in Bermuda and of the fact that the facilities to be provided in Bermuda were by way of a free gift, we should make clear that our offer was subject to the following conditions:—

(a) That the main base should be at the East end of the Colony.

(b) That we should not provide an area for a landing field except at Long Bird Island.

(c) That, except in times of tension, the United States force to be maintained at Bermuda must be much smaller than had been suggested.

(d) That the seaward defences of Bermuda must remain in British hands.
General agreement was expressed with the view that the United States requirements were greatly in excess of what had been contemplated, and were open to serious objection. At the same time, it was felt that it would not be right at this stage, before the matter had been discussed with United States representatives, to record a definite decision setting precise limits to what we could offer. It would be better to put our alternative scheme to the American representatives and to say that we were prepared to discuss both their scheme and ours, and to endeavour to persuade them to accept our suggestions so far as possible.

The War Cabinet agreed as follows:

(1) That the instructions to our representatives at the forthcoming negotiations should be to try to persuade the United States representatives to accept a scheme on the alternative basis proposed in the Memorandum by the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

(2) That it was desirable that the negotiations should take place in this country. In that event there would be no objection to a Bermudan Deputation coming to this country, but that a Bermudan Deputation should not go to Washington.

(3) That, in view of the anxiety shown by the United States Government to make progress with this matter, there was no objection to Lord Lothian showing the United States Government the Report of the Bermuda Committee.

(4) That a telegram authorising Lord Lothian to show this Report to the United States Government should be drafted by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, in consultation with the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and shown to the Prime Minister before despatch.

(5) That the request of the United States Government to send an aircraft tender and some aircraft to Bermuda forthwith should be agreed to. In order to avoid a claim to any site being prejudged, they should be given hospitality at our own bases.

10. The War Cabinet took note of an Interim Report by the Lord Privy Seal (W.P. (G.) (40) 248). This Report stated that the Committee of Ministers, under the Chairmanship of the Lord Privy Seal, had agreed in principle that the existing scheme of compensation for death or injury from air raids should be made of general application to the whole of the civilian population, and that alternative proposals were being prepared for contributory schemes on a voluntary and compulsory basis respectively, providing compensation for personal injury additional to the State scheme.

Richmond Terrace, S.W. 1,
September 27, 1940.
CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held in the Cabinet War Room, S.W. 1, on Monday, September 30, 1940, at 12 Noon.

Present:


The following were also present:


The Right Hon. Sir Archibald Sinclair, Bt., M.P., Secretary of State for Air.

The Right Hon. A. Duff Cooper, M.P., Minister of Information.

Admiral of the Fleet Sir Dudley Pound, First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff.

The Right Hon. Viscount Caldecote, M.P., Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs.

The Right Hon. Anthony Eden, M.P., Secretary of State for War.

The Right Hon. Ernest Bevin, M.P., Minister of Labour and National Service (Item 5).

Air Chief Marshal Sir Cyril L. N. Newall, Chief of the Air Staff.

General Sir John Dill, Chief of the Imperial General Staff.

Secretariat.

Sir Edward Bridges.

Major-General Sir Hastings Ismay.

Mr. W. D. Wilkinson.

Mr. L. F. Burges.
### WAR CABINET 261 (40).

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1. The Chief of the Air Staff reported that the only important enemy operation in the air on the previous day had been a sweep by about 100 aircraft, shortly after 4 P.M., from the Dover–Dungeness direction. Part of this force had approached Central London, but most of it had remained over Kent. All the enemy aircraft in this sweep seemed to be fighters, which flew at a great height.

During the previous night London had again been the principal objective of the enemy bombers. Bombing had been somewhat less intense and there had been fewer fires. The districts most affected had been Acton, Willesden and the South-West Suburbs. Hampshire, South Wales, Liverpool, East Anglia and the Midlands had also been visited.

The casualties on the previous day had been:

**Our Own**
- 5 machines (2 pilots safe).

**Enemy**
- 5 certain.
- 3 probable.
- 2 damaged.

The principal targets of our own bombers had been the Channel Ports, the Bosch Factory at Stuttgart, an oil target at Magdeburg, the Bitterfeld Aluminium Works and the marshalling yards at Hamm and elsewhere.

An unconfirmed report had stated that the *Hipper* had been operating off Stavanger.

Two unknown destroyers had been sighted from the Scilly Isles and British destroyers had been sent to investigate. No further information on the incident was as yet available, except that the Auxiliary Patrol Yacht *Sappho* had failed to answer W/T signals.

The *Erebus* had fired 17 rounds at Calais on the previous night.

The *Dalveen* (British, 5,193 tons) had been sunk off Kinnaird Head. The *Diplomat* (British, 8,240 tons) and the *Peterton* (British, 5,221 tons) had been damaged by fire in Liverpool Docks during the raid on the night of the 26th September.

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff reported that some enemy movement had been observed in the Sidi Barrani area. 100 M.T. tanks and guns had been reported to be about 12 miles South-East of Sidi Barrani, and these, it was presumed, would occupy a perimeter camp, which the enemy had constructed in that neighbourhood. There was nothing however, to indicate that the Italian offensive would be resumed at an early date.

The First Lord of the Admiralty drew attention to reports that German reinforcements for the Egyptian Front were passing through Italy and were being transported to North Africa by air.

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff said that enemy armoured car patrols had been active in the Kassala sector, and their aircraft had been over Gallabat.

The War Cabinet took note of the above statements.
France.
The French Fleet.
(Previous References: W.M. (40) 253rd Conclusions, Minute 4, and W.M. (40) 260th Conclusions, Minute 3.)

2. The War Cabinet had a preliminary discussion on matters connected with certain movements of the French Fleet, resulting from Operation "Menace." A decision on the points raised was deferred until the meeting to be held later in the day.

Air Raid Damage.
(Previous Reference: W.M. (40) 260th Conclusions, Minute 6.)

3. The Home Secretary said that on Saturday, the 28th September, the scale of enemy attack had been rather lighter than on previous days.

On the night the 29th–30th, the main enemy attack had been directed on Liverpool and the London area. Fires had been caused in the Liverpool docks and damage done to warehouses, but little damage had been done outside the dock areas. Birkenhead Docks had also been attacked, but the flour mills had not been damaged.

There had been some large fires in the London area, but for the most part the attack seemed to have spent itself or been stopped South of London. Many bombs had been dropped on the line Guildford–Sevenoaks. Railways had again been affected, but not very seriously.

The Secretary of State for War said that Sir Warren Fisher had asked that the military authorities should make soldiers available to help clear the streets. This request was being considered that morning.

The question was raised whether the lake in St. James's Park was a landmark which the enemy could pick up easily. The Chief of the Air Staff undertook to re-examine the question whether the lake, which afforded a useful reserve of water, should be emptied.

The War Cabinet took note of this statement.

Foreign Information.
Spain.
(Previous Reference: W.M. (40) 260th Conclusions, Minute 5.)

Roumania.
Detention of British Subjects.
Belgium.
(Previous Reference: W.M. (40) 260th Conclusions, Minute 4.)

4. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs gave the following information:

He would be circulating a Paper shortly dealing with the position in Spain.

He had had an interview with the Roumanian Minister as to the detention of British subjects, and had spoken severely to him.

At a recent interview, the Belgian Ambassador had expressed confidence that M. Pierlot and M. Spaak would find means of reaching England.

He had sent a telegram to Sir Stafford Cripps inviting him to seek an interview with M. Molotov, and to sound him on the reactions of the U.S.S.R. to the new Pact between Germany, Italy and Japan. M. Molotov's attitude might show whether the U.S.S.R. had been privy to the Pact. He had also authorised Sir Stafford to sound M. Molotov on the Burma Road question.
The Foreign Secretary said that he had also telegraphed to Sir Robert Craigie, putting to him the various courses open to us in regard to the Burma Road. Lord Lothian had had a discussion with Mr. Cordell Hull about the new Pact and about the Burma Road. It would be necessary for the War Cabinet to have a discussion on the Burma Road question during the course of the present week.

The War Cabinet took note of this information.

5. The War Cabinet had before them a Memorandum by the Minister of Home Security (W.P. (G.) (40) 249).

The Minister of Home Security said that the present policy was to allow racing on a limited scale, unless there were reasons on military grounds or on account of air raid risks why a particular meeting should not be held. No meetings were permitted in the neighbourhood of London. On grounds of home security there was no reason to change this policy, though the War Cabinet might think it unseemly that race meetings should be held in present circumstances.

The Secretary of State for War said that the Commander-in-Chief, Home Forces, would prefer that all horse racing should be stopped. One of his reasons for this was that in certain eventualities a race meeting might interfere with the movements of troops.

Discussion showed that the general view of the War Cabinet was against a complete discontinuance of horse racing, though racing was clearly impracticable in certain areas.

The War Cabinet agreed:

(a) That the present policy of allowing a restricted number of race meetings should continue; provided, of course, that the Jockey Club thought it was worth while to continue on the present lines.
(b) That the Newmarket meeting, to be held that week, should be cancelled.
(c) That the Commander-in-Chief, Home Forces, should be asked to state whether there were certain areas in which, on military grounds, it was desirable to ban all race meetings.

6. The War Cabinet had before them a Memorandum by the Home Secretary (W.P. (G.) (40) 246), about the Children’s Overseas Reception Scheme.

The Home Secretary said that he recommended that, in present circumstances, no more children should be sent overseas under the Government scheme, either in fast or slow convoys, and that a Government announcement should be made to the effect that the scheme had been suspended.

The Home Secretary also asked for a decision from the War Cabinet whether permits should be granted to those who wished to send their children overseas under private arrangements.

The First Lord of the Admiralty said that his Department had not been aware of the extent to which, after the decision reached by the War Cabinet on the 12th July that the operation of the scheme should be postponed, arrangements had continued to be made to send a number of children overseas under the scheme, except that a request had been received from the Ministry of Shipping for the provision of defensive armament, &c., for certain specified ships.
The Home Secretary reminded the War Cabinet that, by agreement with Ministers, that decision had subsequently been somewhat modified. The extent of the modification had been indicated by the Prime Minister in the statement which he had made in the House of Commons on the 18th July, when he had said that any further emigration that might be possible, as opportunity served, would be regulated with a view to restoring the balance between classes; and, furthermore, the scale of movement must necessarily be small in number, and dependent in time upon Naval facilities.

The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs asked that the announcement made should not appear in the Press until Wednesday. This would enable him to inform the Dominion High Commissioners well in advance of the public announcement.

The War Cabinet agreed:

(i) That a Government announcement should be made to the effect that the Children's Overseas Reception Scheme had been temporarily suspended.

(ii) That this announcement should not appear in the Press until the following Wednesday morning.

(iii) That permits should not be refused to those who wished to send their children overseas under private arrangements.

Richmond Terrace, S.W. 1, September 30, 1940.
WAR CABINET 262 (40).

CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held in the Cabinet War Room, S.W. 1, on Monday, September 30, 1940, at 5 P.M.

Present:
The Right Hon. WINSTON S. CHURCHILL, M.P., Prime Minister (in the Chair).
The Right Hon. A. GREENWOOD, M.P., Minister without Portfolio.
The Right Hon. VISCOUNT HALIFAX, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.
The Right Hon. LORD BEAVERBROOK, Minister of Aircraft Production.
The Right Hon. ANTHONY EDEN, M.P., Secretary of State for War.
The Right Hon. ERNEST BEVIN, M.P., Minister of Labour and National Service.
The Right Hon. HERBERT MORRISON, M.P., Minister of Supply.
The Right Hon. Sir ARCHIBALD SINCLAIR, Bt., M.P., Secretary of State for Air.
Air Chief Marshal Sir CYRIL L. N. NEWALL, Chief of the Air Staff.
Admiral of the Fleet Sir DUDLEY POUND, First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff.
General Sir JOHN DILL, Chief of the Imperial General Staff.

Secretariat.
Sir EDWARD BRIDGES.
Mr. W. D. WILKINSON.
Mr. L. F. BURGIS.

CONTENTS.

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Munitions Production 132
Programmes and priorities.

[21796—2]
The War Cabinet had a provisional discussion on the Munitions Situation, and had before them the following Papers:

1. Memorandum by the Minister of Supply (W.P. (40) 339).
2. Memorandum by the Prime Minister (W.P. (40) 352).
3. Memorandum by the Minister of Aircraft Production (W.P. (40) 360).
4. Memorandum by the Secretary of State for War (W.P. (40) 379).
5. Memorandum by the Minister of Labour and National Service (W.P. (40) 378).
6. Appreciation by the Chiefs of Staff on Future Strategy (W.P. (40) 362).

The War Cabinet reached the following Conclusions:

(a) The existing programmes of the three Services were reaffirmed. The Ministers concerned were invited to make sure that their programmes were stated in a concise form, in order that all Departments concerned with the Munitions programme should be fully acquainted with the position.

(b) Every effort must be made to complete the programmes by the due dates. No delay in completion of the programmes could be accepted at this stage. Nevertheless, it would be better to accept some lag in the completion of the programmes, rather than to truncate the programmes themselves.

(c) The available resources of labour, material, and industrial capacity must be allocated proportionately to the existing programmes, the basis of the allocation being determined in relation to strategic priority.

(d) A system of double entry should be devised and administered by a central priority organisation, in order to check the use made by Departments of the material allocated to them, and to ensure that material urgently required by one Service is not being retained in anticipation of the future needs of some other Service.

(e) Where bottlenecks occur, they must be determined by an arbitrary decision, based on the facts of the particular case.

(f) The demand of the Minister of Aircraft Production for 45,000 tons of alloy steel for the Quarter 1st October–31st December, 1940, was approved.

(g) The proposal in the Secretary of State for War's Paper, that 300,000 men should be recruited from within the United Kingdom in the period September 1940–March 1941, inclusive, was approved.

(h) A decision was deferred on the intake into the army in the period April–October 1941. But as this intake would materially affect the labour supply situation, it should be reviewed within the next two months.

(i) The Minister of Supply had ordered 25,000 vehicles in the United States, and was anxious to order another 35,000 at an early date. This matter should be discussed with the Treasury and an early decision reached.

(j) The Minister of Supply wished to increase the order for rifles in the United States from 400,000 to 1,000,000. This order was approved, subject to the Treasury being satisfied that the increase could not be met by, e.g., orders in India or Australia.

(k) The Minister of Supply hoped to obtain increased capacity for the manufacture of small arms ammunition in the United States, and might invite the assistance of the Prime Minister in this matter.
(l) The Secretary of State for War undertook to inform the Minister of Supply, within the next few days, whether the War Office would accept field guns of United States pattern, the United States authorities being unwilling to manufacture guns to the pattern of our 25-pdr. The view generally expressed was that, although it was undesirable to increase the number of different types of guns in the Army, we might well have to agree to accept the United States type of field gun.

(m) General approval was given to the policy outlined in Section VI of the Paper by the Minister of Supply (W.P. (40) 339) for dealing with the ammunition programme. Under this plan, manufacturing capacity would be prepared, ready to produce at short notice the ammunition which the guns could fire; but only a part of this capacity would be put into production forthwith, care being taken not to hamper immediate needs.

(n) The Minister of Supply, the Minister of Aircraft Production and the Minister of Labour, acting in consultation, were authorised to give effect to a scheme whereby directions were given to industrial firms, requiring them to train specified numbers of men and women.

(o) Discussion on these questions should be continued at a further Meeting to be held in the near future.

Richmond Terrace, S.W. 1,
September 30, 1940.
SECRET.
W.M. (40)
263rd Conclusions.

TO BE KEPT UNDER LOCK AND KEY.

It is requested that special care may be taken to ensure the secrecy of this document.

WAR CABINET 263 (40).

CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held in the Cabinet War Room, S.W. 1, on Tuesday, October 1, 1940, at 11:30 a.m.

Present:
The Right Hon. WINSTON S. CHURCHILL, M.P., Prime Minister (in the Chair).
The Right Hon. C. R. ATTLEE, M.P.,
Lord Privy Seal.
The Right Hon. VISCOUNT HALIFAX,
Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.
The Right Hon. A. GREENWOOD, M.P.,
Minister without Portfolio.
The Right Hon. VISCOUNT CALDECOTE,
The Right Hon. LORD LLOYD, Secretary of State for the Colonies (Items 2-4).
The Right Hon. A. V. ALEXANDER,
Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs.
The Right Hon. A. DUFF COOPER, M.P.,
Minister of Information.
The Right Hon. SIR ARCHIBALD SINCLAIR, Bt., M.P.,
Secretary of State for Air (Items 2-4).
The Right Hon. A. V. ALEXANDER,
First Lord of the Admiralty.
The Right Hon. SIR ARCHIBALD SINCLAIR, Bt., M.P.,
Secretary of State for Air (Items 2-4).
The Right Hon. HUGH DALTON, M.P.,
Minister of Economic Warfare (Items 2-4).
The Right Hon. HUGH DALTON, M.P.,
Air Chief Marshal Sir CYRIL L. N. NEWALL, Chief of the Air Staff.
The Right Hon. ANTHONY EDEN, M.P.,
Secretary of State for War.
The Right Hon. ANTHONY EDEN, M.P.,
Secretary of State for War.
The Right Hon. A. V. ALEXANDER,
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The Right Hon. A. V. ALEXANDER,
### WAR CABINET 263 (40).

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1. The Chief of the Air Staff reported that during the daylight hours some 650, and during the night some 275, enemy aircraft had operated over or around this country. The damage to industrial premises and communications had been on a smaller scale.

The casualties on the previous day had been:

- **Our own**
  - 20 machines (12 pilots safe).

- **Enemy**
  - 46 certain.
  - 32 probable.
  - 29 damaged.

Our own bombers had secured good results at Ostend, Berlin, Leuna and Mannheim.

The First Sea Lord reported that the wreckage of H.M. Yacht *Sappho* had been found in St. Austell's Bay, Cornwall. It was thought probable that the enemy had picked up survivors. H.M. Corvette *Mallard* had been bombed by aircraft 30 miles east of Harwich and was considerably damaged.

H.M.A.S. *Stuart*, in co-operation with a flying boat, had sunk an Italian submarine 60 miles West-North-West of Alexandria on the previous afternoon.

A large Italian vessel, probably bound for Bomba or Tobruk, had been destroyed off the coast of Libya.

Military personnel to the number of about 1,000 were on their way from Alexandria to Malta in two cruisers.

We had lost a refrigerated vessel of about 14,000 tons. Another vessel of about 11,000 tons had been set on fire, but the fire had been extinguished.

Reference was made to Washington Telegram No. 2140, which contained a suggestion that we should intercept the sea-bound transport of the German motorised units which were reported to be on the way to Libya via Italy. This suggestion would be examined.

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff said that there had been no important developments during the preceding twenty-four hours.

The War Cabinet took note of the above statements.

2. The Prime Minister read to the War Cabinet a personal telegram from Mr. Menzies to the effect that the Australian Government were much disturbed over the failure of this operation, the conduct of which was strongly criticised. The telegram ended by expressing the hope that we had not underestimated the difficulties we should have to meet in the Middle East.

The Prime Minister read the terms of the reply which he proposed to send. This reply met with the complete approval of the War Cabinet.

The Prime Minister then read a telegram from General Smuts, raising various issues in regard to the position in the Middle East and on the Atlantic coast of Africa.

The War Cabinet:

- Invited the Chiefs of Staff to report on General Smuts's telegram.

The Prime Minister also referred to two incidents which seemed to show that prompt use had not been made of advance information.
of the intention of the Vichy authorities to send warships from Toulon into the Atlantic.

The War Cabinet:

Invited the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and the First Lord of the Admiralty to investigate these incidents.

3. The War Cabinet had before them the following papers:

   (a) Memorandum by the Foreign Secretary (W.P. (40) 392).
   (b) Memorandum by the First Lord of the Admiralty (W.P. (40) 396).
   (c) Memorandum by the Foreign Secretary covering a Report from the Foreign Allied Resistance Committee dealing with Economic Pressure on French West Africa (W.P. (40) 395).
   (d) Memoranda by the Vice-Chief of the Naval Staff on Free French action in certain islands (W.P. (40) 389).

A record of the discussion, and of the conclusions reached, is contained in the Secretary’s Standard File of War Cabinet Conclusions.

4. The First Lord of the Admiralty said that the following telegram had been received from the Commander-in-Chief, South Atlantic:

   "General de Gaulle, if he goes to Duala, asks to take with him the officers and men prisoners from French submarine sunk off Dakar. These he would hold as hostages for his airmen and emissaries held at Dakar and endeavour to effect exchange. Officers and crew of submarine were informed in sense of Admiralty 1638/24 by Captain of H.M.S. Cumberland, but without any guarantee of how and when this would be done. If above not agreed intended to send to United Kingdom in His Majesty’s ship at first opportunity, and de Gaulle asks that His Majesty’s Government may negotiate exchange."

The War Cabinet were reminded that we had declared our intention of releasing the crew of this submarine and returning them to France. This declaration, however, had been made before we had been aware that certain of General de Gaulle’s air emissaries were being held at Dakar.

The War Cabinet:

Agreed that, in the circumstances, we should offer to exchange the Officers and men from the French submarine sunk off Dakar with General de Gaulle’s air emissaries now held at Dakar; and authorised the First Lord of the Admiralty to proceed accordingly.

Richmond Terrace, S.W. 1.
October 1, 1940.
SECRET.

W.M. (40)

264th Conclusions.

TO BE KEPT UNDER LOCK AND KEY.

It is requested that special care may be taken to ensure the secrecy of this document.

WAR CABINET 264 (40).

CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held in the Cabinet War Room, S.W. 1, on Wednesday, October 2, 1940, at 12 Noon.

Present:

The Right Hon. WINSTON S. CHURCHILL, M.P., Prime Minister (in the Chair).

The Right Hon. C. R. ATTLEE, M.P.,
Lord Privy Seal.

The Right Hon. VISCOUNT HALIFAX,
Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

The Right Hon. A. GREENWOOD, M.P.,
Minister without Portfolio.

The following were also present:


The Right Hon. ANTHONY EDEN, M.P.,
Secretary of State for War.

The Right Hon. A. DUFF COOPER, M.P.,
Minister of Information.

Admiral of the Fleet Sir DUDLEY POUND, First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff.

The Right Hon. LORD LLOYD, Secretary of State for the Colonies.

Sir Orme Sargent, Deputy Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

Secretariat:

Sir EDWARD BRIDGES.
Major-General Sir HASTINGS ISMAY.
Mr. W. D. WILKINSON.
Mr. L. F. BURGIS.
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Naval, Military and Air Operations.

1. The Chief of the Air Staff reported that on the previous day 450 enemy aircraft had been over this country but had done practically no damage. There had been two attempts to attack Portsmouth which had been repulsed. The fact that these attacks had been driven off over the sea probably accounted for the equality of pilot casualties. The casualties had been as follows:

Our Own—

- 5 machines (1 pilot safe).

Enemy—

- 4 certain.
- 1 probable.
- 5 damaged.

On the previous night about 250 enemy aircraft had made raids, London being the main objective, although a number had penetrated to the Midlands and South Wales. The oil installation at Purfleet had been hit, but the fire had been put out immediately.

On the previous night 88 of our aircraft had attacked various targets in Germany, including gas plants in Berlin. Invasion ports had also been attacked. We had lost three machines, and two others had been lost on reconnaissance and photographic flights.

Tobruk Harbour had been attacked and large fires had been started. One of our fighters had attacked and destroyed an Italian machine on the ground west of Barrani. One of our aircraft had been lost.

During the last Italian attack on Haifa, four machines had been shot down by A.A. fire. One of these machines had contained a German pilot with an Italian crew.

Reference was made to recent reports from a number of sources that, although our bombs hit their targets, yet the weight of the bombs was not enough to cause considerable damage. The Secretary of State for Air said that he had discussed this question with the Commander-in-Chief, Bomber Command. The loading of aircraft with bombs was always very carefully calculated and the effect which could be obtained from different sizes of bombs, having regard to the nature of the target to be attacked, worked out in detail. When bigger bombers were available, it would be possible to carry a more effective load.

In answer to a further question, the Secretary of State for Air said that the Air Staff always regarded oil refineries and aircraft production factories as their main bombing objectives in Germany. It had been necessary during recent weeks to divert our attacks to the invasion ports, but on the last few nights it had been possible to resume, to a certain extent, our attacks on what the Air Staff regarded as our primary targets in Germany.

The First Sea Lord reported that King George V had been commissioned on the previous day.

Certain of our naval forces were in the vicinity of the Azores.

The War Cabinet:

Invited the Chiefs of Staff, together with a representative of the Foreign Office, to consider whether these movements should, or should not, be carried out in such a way as to avoid attracting notice to the presence of a British Naval force near the Azores.

Dakar.

An air reconnaissance had reported that Richelieu and three French cruisers were still at Dakar.

Force "M."

Certain movements of General de Gaulle's force were reported. H.M. Submarine Swordfish had reported that on the morning of the 1st October she had attacked four small destroyers east of Cherbourg and believed she had made one hit.
An Italian submarine had sunk a Spanish merchant ship in the Mediterranean.

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff reported that one of our patrols had observed only white troops at Sofafi East Camp (south of Buqbuq). Air reconnaissance had reported 30 motor-transport vehicles moving east into Barrani. Eighty motor-transports had been seen stationary halfway between Buqbuq and Sidi Barrani. Thirty motor-transports, with three tanks and guns, had been seen moving south from Tummar, 10 miles south of Sidi Barrani.

The War Cabinet took note of the above statements.

2. The Secretary of State for the Home Department and Minister of Home Security said that, outside London, the most serious attacks during the previous night had been directed against Manchester. Details of the damage were not yet available. It looked as though the enemy had scored a number of lucky hits on railway communications. Railway repair work was being rapidly carried out, but delays were still caused by unexploded bombs, although the position in this respect had improved.

The Prime Minister referred to a statement by the Editor of The New Statesman and Nation, which had been brought to his notice, giving an account of conditions in the large shelter at Stepney.

In parts of this building, which had not been thought suitable for a shelter, and had not therefore been recognised as such, and suitably equipped, indescribable conditions had prevailed. The Prime Minister urged the need for strong action to prevent large numbers of people crowding into this building until the necessary work had been done to make it safe. From all he learnt of the position, drastic action was called for, and the Air Raid Precautions Officer in Stepney should be immediately superseded.

The Home Secretary said that steps were being taken to deal with the Stepney shelter, and Admiral Evans, Regional Commissioner, had been given the fullest powers to deal with this matter, including supersession of this particular Air Raid Precautions Officer.

The War Cabinet took note of this statement.

3. The First Lord of the Admiralty said that a message had been received from the French Admiralty through our Naval Attaché in Madrid, reporting that the French merchant vessel Esperance, en route for Jibuti to embark French troops for Indo-China, had been taken to Aden. The message added that it was hoped we should not interfere with French troopships, especially the Esperance, for if these troops in Jibuti could not be evacuated with their arms, these arms would fall into Italian hands. The troops were intended to keep order in Indo-China, and it was therefore in British interests to allow their passage.

In discussion it was pointed out that the removal of these troops from Jibuti would have the effect of weakening French resistance to Italian demands, and would relieve their economic difficulties. Further, if these troops were removed, there was a great risk of the oil supplies in the neighbourhood of Jibuti falling into Italian hands. The Commander-in-Chief, Middle East, who had been consulted, was strongly opposed to allowing these troops to leave Jibuti. Further, their presence in Indo-China would not serve any useful purpose.
The War Cabinet:

(1) Agreed that the Esperance should not be allowed to proceed to Jibuti.

(2) Authorised the First Lord of the Admiralty, in consultation with the Foreign Office, to send a full reply to the French Admiralty through our Naval Attaché in Madrid, giving the reasons for our action.

4. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs said that in the near future there might be several ways in which we should be able to cause inconvenience to the Japanese without ceasing to act politely. Already a number of steps had been taken to interfere with Japanese trading facilities. He suggested the appointment of an Interdepartmental Committee on Far Eastern Affairs, with the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in the chair, to co-ordinate activities in this direction.

The War Cabinet—

Authorised the Foreign Secretary to set up an Interdepartmental Committee on Far Eastern matters, under the Chairmanship of the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

5. The Prime Minister referred to Foreign Office telegram No. 2406, dated the 29th September, to our Ambassador at Washington. He thought that there might be certain advantages in a proposal for parallel declarations by the United States, Australia, New Zealand, the Netherlands and ourselves, that we intended to maintain the status quo in the South Pacific. The Prime Minister also questioned the statement that it was not in our interests that the United States should be involved in war in the Pacific.

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs said that the argument was that, if the United States became involved in war in the Pacific, the result might be to shut off supplies of arms that we required to fight our principal enemy, Germany. He agreed, however, that the telegram was unduly compressed, and perhaps rather misleading, and he would send a further telegram in amplification.

The War Cabinet took note of this statement.

The Pacific.

Anglo-American co-operation.

6. The War Cabinet had before them a draft telegram to our Ambassador at Madrid (W.P. (40) 397) prepared by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in the light of the discussion at the Meeting of the War Cabinet on the previous day. The War Cabinet also had before them copies of telegrams Nos. 724, 725 and 726 from the United Kingdom High Commissioner in the Union of South Africa.

The following amendments to the draft telegram were approved:

Paragraph 1 (c): Should end “which rally to his cause.”
Paragraph 2, line 3: For “two” read “three.”
Paragraph 2 (a): The words in brackets should stand.
Paragraph 2 (b): For “prepared to receive” read “prepared to study.”
Paragraph 2: Add at the end a new sub-paragraph (c):
“‘How to ensure that ships of the French Government can in no circumstances fall into German or Italian hands.’"
Paragraph 3, lines 8 and 9: For “to abandon the attitude of hostility which,” read “to adopt a more co-operative attitude than.”

Paragraph 4, line 1: Before “information” add “secret.”

Paragraph 4: Add at the end of the first sentence, after “ports,” “and to stop all unescorted merchant ships proceeding to French Metropolitan or African ports.”

The War Cabinet:
(1) Approved the despatch of the draft telegram to Madrid, subject to the above amendments.
(2) Agreed that a copy should be sent to General de Gaulle, but that the despatch of the telegram to Madrid need not await his reply.
(3) With reference to telegram No. 726 from our High Commissioner in the Union of South Africa, authorised the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to send to General Smuts a copy of the letters between the Prime Minister and General de Gaulle, exchanged in connection with the Agreement reached with the General.

7. The War Cabinet had before them a Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (W.P. 40 394), regarding methods of affording support to the Non-Interventionist Party in Spain. With the return of Señor Sumer from Berlin, the struggle between the Interventionists (Señor Sumer and the Falangist Party) and the Non-Interventionists (Colonel Beigbeder and the Army) might reach its climax. We might be able to make concessions to Spain in respect of—

(a) Certain blockade matters.
(b) Gibraltar.
(c) Morocco.

Attention was also drawn to Madrid Telegram No. 801, dated the 29th September, in which Sir Samuel Hoare submitted a tentative draft of a statement intended for publication, dealing with these three matters. He suggested that the statement should be discussed with Colonel Beigbeder, whose views would be referred to the Foreign Secretary before any commitments were entered into.

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs said that, as a result of a conversation with the Minister of Economic Warfare, he had found that action was being taken which it was hoped would meet many of Sir Samuel Hoare’s difficulties on blockade matters. He would telegraph to Sir Samuel Hoare telling him what was being done at this end; and inviting him to report further on any matters in which the action which we were taking fell short of what he considered to be essential.

General agreement was expressed with the course of action proposed by the Foreign Secretary.

The Foreign Secretary said that he had now come to the conclusion that the best way of dealing with the Gibraltar issue would be to authorise Sir Samuel Hoare to repeat in public the assurance which he had been authorised in June last to give Colonel Beigbeder in private, namely:

(a) That, for reasons which the Spanish Government would readily comprehend, we could not discuss the question of Gibraltar during the war.
(b) That we would be prepared to discuss any question of common interest to ourselves and Spain after the conclusion of hostilities.
We would regard this discussion and any settlement as matters primarily, if not exclusively, concerning ourselves and Spain.

He thought that a statement on these lines would help Colonel Beigbeder against Senor Suner, but would not involve us in any binding commitments.

The general view of the War Cabinet was against authorising any public statement on these lines. Such a statement would give an impression of weakness abroad. At home it would be strongly criticised, and would probably give rise to discussion in Parliament which would show how little this vague formula meant. It was possible to conceive a state of affairs in which fortresses now in the hands of different Powers might be neutralised and dismantled, but we were very far from such a position at the moment.

Morocco. It was pointed out that Colonel Beigbeder had said that Morocco was of more interest to him than the future of Gibraltar. It was also felt that Spanish aspirations in Morocco were well-founded, and that as France might well have to surrender some of her Moroccan territory to Spain in the Peace Treaty, it was foolish to resist these aspirations. Looking at the matter from this point of view, the Prime Minister thought that there would be no objection to making a statement, not merely in private, but also in public, on the lines of the last half of paragraph 11 of the Foreign Secretary's Memorandum.

On the other hand, it was argued that there might be some disadvantage in doing this at the same time as we were endeavouring to improve our relations with the Vichy Government, and that a statement on these lines might hamper General de Gaulle's movement.

The general conclusion reached was that a public statement on the Moroccan question should, if necessary, follow the lines of paragraph 4 of telegram No. 801 from Madrid.

In the course of discussion, reference was made to some mischievous articles in the News Chronicle on the Spanish question.

The War Cabinet—

(a) Invited the Foreign Secretary, in consultation with the Minister of Economic Warfare, to telegraph to His Majesty's Ambassador in Madrid on the lines proposed at "A."

(b) Invited the Foreign Secretary to inform Sir Samuel Hoare that the War Cabinet deprecated any public statement about Gibraltar at the present time. The Spanish Government should, if necessary, be told that publication at this juncture of the private assurance given in June last would create great difficulties in this country, and would be likely to lead to a definition of the word "discussion," which might be embarrassing to both parties.

(c) Agreed that Sir Samuel Hoare should be authorised to give a private assurance about Morocco on the lines suggested in paragraph 11 of the Foreign Secretary's Paper; and that any public statement should be on the lines suggested in paragraph 4 of Sir Samuel Hoare's telegram No. 801.

(d) Invited the Secretary of State for Air to use his influence with the proprietors of the News Chronicle to secure a cessation of the mischievous articles which had recently appeared in that Paper.

Richmond Terrace, S.W. 1.
October 2, 1940.
CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at Paddock on Thursday, October 3, 1940, at 11.30 A.M.

Present:

The Right Hon. W. S. CHURCHILL, M.P., Prime Minister (in the Chair).
The Right Hon. VISCOUNT HALIFAX, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.
The Right Hon. A. GREENWOOD, M.P., Minister without Portfolio.

The following were also present:

The Right Hon. SIR KINGSLEY WOOD, M.P., Chancellor of the Exchequer.
The Right Hon. VISCOUNT CALDECOTE, Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs.
The Right Hon. L. S. AMERY, M.P., Secretary of State for India and Secretary of State for Burma.
The Right Hon. L. DUNCAN, M.P., President of the Board of Trade.


Air Chief Marshal Sir CYRIL L. N. NEWALL, Chief of the Air Staff.

Sir EDWARD BRIDGES, Major-General Sir HASTINGS ISMAY.
Mr. W. D. WILKINSON.
Mr. L. F. BURGIS.
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Naval, Military and Air Operations.

1. The Chief of the Air Staff reported that on the previous day 250 enemy aircraft had been over this country but had only dropped a few bombs on the South Coast. Casualties had been:

   **Our own**
   - 1 machine (pilot safe but wounded).

   **Enemy**
   - 10 certain.
   - 1 probable.
   - 2 damaged.

On the previous night the weather had been very bad but a few of our bombers had reached Berlin. We had lost 1 medium and 2 heavy bombers.

Our aircraft had bombed enemy concentrations and aerodromes at Assab.

Naval Operations.

The Chief of the Naval Staff reported that the Mediterranean Fleet had returned to Alexandria. Two Italian U-boats had been sunk in the Mediterranean.

The York and the Warspite had been unsuccessfully attacked by bombs and had shot down a number of enemy aircraft.

On the previous day we had lost a merchant ship of 4,600 tons and belated reports had been received regarding the sinking of 3 other merchant ships far out in the Atlantic.

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff reported that there had been no change in the situation in the Middle East. A number of perimeter camps in the Desert had been observed. The Italians had not yet mended the road between Sollum and Sidi Barrani.

The War Cabinet took note of the above statements.

France.

Policy towards the Vichy Government.

2. A further discussion took place on this subject and is recorded in the Secretary's Standard File of War Cabinet Conclusions.

Germany and Italy.

Possible future strategy.

3. The Foreign Secretary drew attention to two telegrams (Nos. 1265 from Angora and 638 from Sofia) reporting statements that the German Government did not now expect to succeed in invading England, but that they hoped by bombing the Midlands and South to bring about the collapse of the present Government and its replacement by a more amenable one.

What then was likely to be Germany's probable strategy in the next few months?

Certain indications pointed to a move of German troops through Italy to Libya, to take part in the Egyptian campaign; this seemed more likely than an attempt to move through Spain and Morocco, or a move into the Balkans.

Should further reinforcements be sent to Malta or the Middle East? The Prime Minister thought that this should be considered again in a few days' time.

The War Cabinet took note of the above statements.
4. The Home Secretary said that very little damage had been caused in the previous 24 hours. There had been a serious fire at a rubber factory in Lancashire.

Reference was made to the fact that the "All Clear" had been sounded on the last two nights early in the night, and had been followed, after an interval, by another "red" warning. This had resulted in a certain number of people leaving their shelters and subsequently returning to them. On the other hand, it was pointed out that the period of an hour during the previous night between the "All Clear" and the further "red" warning had given great relief to civil defence services, and had speeded up traffic. There was, therefore, much to be said for continuance of the present practice.

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs said that Mr. Victor Cazalet, M.P., who had visited the large shelter in Stepney on the previous night, had given a very favourable account of the conditions there.

Reference was made to complaints of delay in digging out people who had been buried under houses.

The Home Secretary said that, though he had heard of such delay in one or two isolated cases, on the whole the rescue parties had worked very quickly. The proposal that soldiers should help in clearing debris had been satisfactorily settled at a conference the previous day. It was proposed that soldiers should lend a hand during next week, as a temporary arrangement, to overtake arrears, while a civilian labour force was being organised. Some discussion ensued as to the funerals of the victims of air raids. The Home Secretary said that arrangements had been made for state funerals at the State expense for all victims of air raids.

The War Cabinet took note of the above statements.

5. The War Cabinet had before them a Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (W.P. (40) 400).

It was argued in the Memorandum that, in view of the Japanese aggression in Indo-China, and of the German–Italian–Japanese Pact, the question was not so much whether we should re-open the Burma Road, as when we should do so. Lord Lothian had made it clear that the case for refusing to renew the Burma Road agreement, as seen from Washington, was overwhelming; and he had reported Mr. Cordell Hull as saying that he "greatly hoped that we would re-open the Burma Road.'

In these circumstances, the Foreign Secretary suggested that the best and least provocative method of announcing our decision not to renew the agreement would be by means of a reply to a Parliamentary Question on Tuesday, the 8th October, in the sense that the agreement had been concluded for a definite period, and contained no provision for renewal, and that in any case in view of recent developments His Majesty's Government would have felt unable to agree to renewal, if this had been in question.

The Prime Minister was clear that this was the right decision. He did not believe that the Japanese would declare war upon us as a result. We should be justified in taking the line that, whereas we had expected the Japanese during the interval afforded by the currency of the Burma Road agreement to make a genuine effort to reach an all-round settlement, all they had done was to make the German–Italian–Japanese Pact. In these circumstances, we had no option but to carry out our duties as a neutral in the Sino–Japanese conflict.
It was significant that Sir Robert Craigie, who three months ago had thought that Japan would declare war on us, if we did not close the road, was now in favour of the termination of the agreement.

The War Cabinet—

(a) Unanimously endorsed the views of the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary, and approved the procedure suggested by the latter, under which the announcement as to the non-renewal of the Burma Road agreement would be made in Parliament on Tuesday, the 8th October.

(b) Invited the Dominions Secretary to telegraph that day to the Dominion Governments, fully apprising them of all the circumstances, including the attitude adopted by the United States Government, and informing them of the decision which we proposed to announce on the 8th October. The telegrams to the Dominion Governments should take the form that we should take this action, subject to their concurrence. There was no doubt that the views of the Dominion Governments were similar to our own.

(c) Invited the Foreign Secretary to instruct Sir Stafford Cripps to seek an interview with M. Molotov to apprise him fully of all the circumstances, including the attitude adopted by Mr. Cordell Hull, and to inform him of the decision which we proposed to announce on the 8th October. In stating the case to M. Molotov, Sir Stafford Cripps might take the opportunity of drawing attention to the increasing harmony of opinion and identity of interest between this country, the United States, Russia and China. These instructions would furnish the reply to telegram No. 805 from Moscow.

(d) Invited the Foreign Secretary to send instructions to our Ambassador in China that General Chiang Kai-shek should be informed of this decision on Sunday, the 6th October.

(e) Invited the Prime Minister to communicate their decision in a personal telegram to President Roosevelt.

6. In connection with the previous Minute, the Foreign Secretary said that the Dutch Foreign Minister, at a recent interview, had remarked that the attitude of the Japanese in regard to their dealings with the Netherland East Indies had become much less stiff about the middle of August, i.e., after the first great air battle in this country in which we had defeated the German air forces. The Dutch Foreign Minister did not think that the Japanese were in a position to embark on any important new military venture at the present time.

The Prime Minister drew attention to a recent telegram No. 1901 from Sir Robert Craigie in which it had not been taken for granted, as it should have been, that the British Empire would be involved in the event of war between the United States and Japan.

The Foreign Secretary said that he would make it clear to Sir Robert Craigie that, if the United States were at war with Japan, we should certainly declare war on that country.

The War Cabinet took note of the above statements.
The Far East.

7. The Prime Minister drew attention to telegram No. 1905 from Tokyo in which it was suggested that a United States Naval Force might pay a visit to Singapore. He felt that this suggestion was one that we should follow up promptly. It might be possible to combine a courtesy visit to Singapore by an American Battle Squadron with the holding of the British-American-Dutch Technical Conversations which had been suggested by Mr. Cordell Hull (Washington telegram No. 2147).

The War Cabinet—

Invited the Chiefs of Staff to consider as a matter of urgency whether it was desirable that British-American-Dutch Technical Military Conversations should be held at Singapore, and to submit to the Foreign Secretary definite suggestion which he could communicate to Lord Lothian.

Switzerland.

8. The Foreign Secretary informed the War Cabinet that on the previous day the Swiss Minister had discussed the R.A.F. violations of Swiss neutrality with complete good humour. If we had to pass over Switzerland, he hoped that as far as possible we would use the Geneva route. Later on the weather might make it impossible for us to fly over his country, in which case he hoped that we would make a virtue of necessity and draw attention to the correctness of our attitude. He was emphatically not in favour of a policy of concentrating into, say, one week of intense aerial activity all the visits to Northern Italy which we might otherwise have paid over a period of, say, six weeks.

The War Cabinet took note of the above statement.

Air Raids.

9. The War Cabinet had before them a Memorandum by the Chancellor of the Exchequer outlining a scheme of compensation for damage to immovable property (W.P. (G.) (40) 251).

The Chancellor of the Exchequer said that it had originally been proposed that the charge of 3 per cent. to be levied on the capital value of all immovable property, should not be paid until after the war. The Lord President’s Committee and the Consultative Council at the Treasury had, however, both thought that some payment on account should be made now. This was clearly desirable, provided that suitable machinery could be devised for the purpose. It had been thought that this could best be done by using the machinery of Schedule A, and by levying an extra 2s. in the £. This would mean a payment of £2 10s. on a house worth £500 with an annual value of £25.

In discussion, general agreement was expressed with the scheme. It would give great assurance, especially to the less well-to-do property-owners, to know that if their home or place of business was destroyed, they would get compensation for it. Further, this scheme of compensation would prevent the value of the property declining. The Exchequer would benefit from this, e.g., in death duties.

The President of the Board of Trade said that he had favoured an alternative scheme whereby persons whose property was liable to the charge of 3 per cent. would be invited to liquidate the charge voluntarily during the war, if they so desired; but if they did not so wish, no payment should be made until after the war. If, however, this scheme could not be accepted as an alternative to the extra 2s. in the £ under Schedule A to be paid on account, he then did not wish to press it.
The First Lord of the Admiralty said that he would like to have seen the scheme worked through the Insurance Companies, and he still thought that this might have resulted in reduced administrative costs.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer said that this possibility had been explored and was not regarded as practicable, but he would be glad to discuss the point further with the First Lord.

It was pointed out that a number of property-owners, e.g., those whose businesses had been destroyed or whose property was in areas which had been evacuated, could not be expected to pay anything now.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer agreed and said that this would be dealt with as a matter of administration. He proposed to make this clear when introducing the Bill.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer also drew attention to the provision in paragraph 6 of his Paper for a voluntary insurance scheme for furniture and personal possessions above the income limits for free compensation. If possible, this scheme should be brought in at the same time as the scheme for compensation for war damage to immovable property. This was agreed to.

The War Cabinet—
Approved in principle the proposals set out in the Chancellor of the Exchequer’s Paper, and invited him to consult various Parties and Members in the House, and to arrange for a draft Bill to be submitted to the Home Policy Committee.

10. The War Cabinet had before them a Memorandum by the Minister of Aircraft Production (W.P. (40) 391).

The War Cabinet—
Invited the Chief of the Imperial General Staff to discuss the proposals in this Paper informally with the Minister of Aircraft Production.

Richmond Terrace, S.W. 1,
October 3, 1940.
CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held in the Cabinet War Room, S.W. 1, on Friday, October 4, 1940, at 12 noon.

Present:

The Right Hon. WINSTON S. CHURCHILL, M.P., Prime Minister (in the Chair).
The Right Hon. VISCOUNT HALIFAX, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.
The Right Hon. Sir KINGSLEY WOOD, M.P., Chancellor of the Exchequer.
The Right Hon. HERBERT MORRISON, M.P., Secretary of State for Home Security (Items 1-6).
The Right Hon. Sir ARCHIBALD SINCLAIR, Bt., M.P., Secretary of State for Air.
The Right Hon. A. DUFF COOPER, M.P., Minister of Information.

Admiral of the Fleet Sir DUDLEY POUND, First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff (Items 1-5).

The following were also present:

The Right Hon. Sir JOHN ANDERSON, M.P., Lord President of the Council.
The Right Hon. A. GREENWOOD, M.P., Minister without Portfolio.
The Right Hon. ERNEST BEVIN, M.P., Minister of Labour and National Service.
The Right Hon. VISCOUNT CRANBORNE, M.P., Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs.
The Right Hon. ANTHONY EDEN, M.P., Secretary of State for War (Items 1-6).
The Right Hon. RONALD HIBBERT CROSS, M.P., Minister of Shipping (Items 5 and 6).
Air Chief Marshal Sir C Y R I H. L. N. NEWALL, Chief of the Air Staff (Items 1-5).

Lieutenant-General Sir ROBERT HAINING, Vice-Chief of the Imperial General Staff (Items 1-5).

Secretariat:

Sir EDWARD BRIDGES.
Major-General Sir HASTINGS ISMAY.
Mr. W. D. WILKINSON.
Mr. L. F. BURGIS.
## WAR CABINET 268 (40).

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1. The Chief of the Air Staff reported that enemy air activity had been on a much reduced scale during the twenty-four hours ended that morning. The enemy had sent over some 80 aircraft during the day and some 60 aircraft during the night. The only serious damage done had been at the De Havilland aircraft factory, where there had been a daylight attack by a single enemy aircraft. All our own operations had been cancelled owing to conditions of poor visibility. The enemy had lost one aircraft, destroyed by our light anti-aircraft fire. Our losses had been nil.

The First Sea Lord reported certain movements of the Mediterranean Fleet and of H.M.S. Renown. Three sorties of 3 Skuas had been sent to harass enemy shipping between Haugesund and Bergen during the afternoon of the previous day. Two sections had attacked a merchant ship of 4,000-5,000 tons alongside at Haugesund, and had scored several hits. The ship had last been seen heavily on fire. The third section had attacked a ship of 2,000 tons in Bjorn Fjord; hits had been scored and it was thought probable that she had sunk. This section had been attacked by 5 enemy fighters, which had shot down 1 Skua and damaged the other two.

The Secretary of State for War said that there had been no important developments.

The War Cabinet took note of the above statements.

2. The War Cabinet discussed the despatch of reinforcement convoys to the Middle East. A record of the discussion, and of the Conclusions reached, is contained in the Secretary's Standard File of War Cabinet Conclusions.

3. The War Cabinet were given certain information, which is recorded in the Secretary's Standard File of War Cabinet Conclusions, as to the future movements of General de Gaulle's Forces.

4. The Prime Minister drew attention to the appreciation of the United States reactions to the Dakar incident contained in Washington telegram No. 2138.

Competent French-Americans said that the French people, including even Baudouin, were veering towards Great Britain and that the swing would have been strengthened had we sunk the French ships before they reached Dakar, success being now the one essential.

The Prime Minister referred to a number of indications from which we could draw encouragement, as to the forces at work in different parts of the French Empire.

His mind was moving in the direction of doing nothing to hamper either the French or the Spanish communications with North Africa, while maintaining our contraband control over the French and Spanish trade entering the Mediterranean by the Straits of...
Gibraltar. We might declare our policy on this matter in connection with the approach now being made to the Vichy Government through the French Ambassador in Madrid. The matter was not ripe for decision that day.

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs said that he was studying a Minute on these questions, which he had received from the Prime Minister. His first reactions to the suggested new policy were favourable, although he could not answer for the Minister of Economic Warfare, who might see great objections to the reopening of trade between France and North Africa, and to a less extent to the reopening of trade between Spain and Morocco.

The Prime Minister's suggestion appeared to offer a way of escape from the present position, in which we got all the odium of a blockade which we could not strictly enforce.

He was in touch with the Minister of Economic Warfare and he hoped to be able to make a statement at the War Cabinet Meeting on Monday, the 7th October. The First Lord of the Admiralty would also wish for time to study the Prime Minister's suggestion.

The War Cabinet--

Took note that the Foreign Secretary, after consultation with the Minister of Economic Warfare, would make a statement on these matters on Monday, the 7th October.

Shipping.

Protection of merchant shipping in convoy.

5. The War Cabinet had before them Memoranda by the Minister of Shipping, the Minister of Food and the First Lord of the Admiralty (W.P. (40) 363, 401 and 403, respectively).

The Prime Minister said that this matter had been discussed on the previous evening at a Meeting of the Defence Committee.* The conclusion reached had been that, in view of the fact that suitable weather for an invasion was not likely to prevail on many occasions during the winter months, and taking into account the very heavy sinkings which were being sustained, it would be right to divert a number of destroyers and anti-submarine trawlers from anti-invasion duties, to reinforce the escorts to shipping in the North-West Approaches. Some of the vessels could be recalled at short notice, to assist in repelling any attempt to invade these Islands.

In addition to the vessels thus released, it was hoped to have 10 further destroyers and 6 corvettes available for service in the next four weeks, including vessels received from the U.S.A.

The Minister of Shipping referred to the increasing number of ships damaged by air attack off the North-East Coast of Scotland. Great importance was attached to adequate air protection for these convoys.

The Minister of Labour and National Service suggested that further steps could be taken to expedite salvage and repair work. The First Lord of the Admiralty undertook to look into this point.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Minister without Portfolio said that they were not prepared, on present advice, to agree to the request of the Minister of Food that the import programmes for the second year of war should be re-considered with a view to the making of a larger proportion of shipping available for food.

The War Cabinet--

(1) Took note with approval of the steps proposed for improving the protection for merchant ships in convoy.

(2) Invited the First Lord of the Admiralty to consider, in conjunction with the Minister of Labour and National Service, whether steps could be taken to expedite the salvage and repair of merchant ships.

* D.O. (40) 393rd Meeting.
6. The War Cabinet again had before them a Memorandum by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Shipping (W.P. (G.) (40) 216) asking for authority to announce that, as part of the Government’s shipping policy, shipowners who had lost their ships by war or marine risk, and who had not themselves placed an order for replacement, would be given the opportunity, in order of date of loss, to purchase new Government-built ships to replace such tonnage.

The Minister of Shipping made the following points in addition to those made in the Memorandum:—

First, that his predecessor had given a definite but not very specific undertaking to shipowners that their shipping losses would be replaced.

Secondly, that unless he took the step now proposed, he would be forced to devise a scheme on a larger scale for post-war replacement. He would prefer to anticipate this scheme by his present proposal, which would be an earnest of the Government’s good faith with the owners.

In discussion, the view was expressed that to dispose of Government-owned ships to shipowners at the present time would give rise to a good deal of criticism. While it was true that this measure would not in effect prejudice the question of the future of Shipping after the war, the proposal might nevertheless raise Party issues. It was also represented by the Minister of Labour and National Service that the measure proposed might well result in some agitation in the shipyards. The men in the yards had agreed to a number of steps on the ground that the ships were being built for the Government in order to help win the war.

On the other hand, it was pointed out that if nothing was done, the shipowners would come forward and say that the undertaking given to them was not being fulfilled. It was therefore of the first importance to consider this matter in the light of the precise terms of the pledge or undertaking given by the late Minister of Shipping.

The War Cabinet—

Postponed further consideration of the Memorandum (W.P. (G.) (40) 216) pending submission by the Minister of Shipping of a further Paper setting out the precise terms of the undertaking given to the shipowners by his predecessor.

7. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs said that a draft telegram had been prepared, for despatch to Sir Samuel Hoare, in regard to the public statement which the latter should be authorised to make. The following sentence in the draft ought to be submitted to the War Cabinet:

“As regards special questions in which the Spanish Government is particularly interested, His Majesty’s Government are no less prepared to approach the consideration of these questions with a full appreciation of Spanish aspirations.”

In discussion it was argued that, unless something was said which might be regarded as covering the case of Gibraltar, the statement would lose most of its value. On the other hand, it was said that if this sentence was included in the statement, there would almost certainly be demands for its elucidation which would prove embarrassing.
The War Cabinet agreed—
That the following sentence should be substituted therefor:—
"His Majesty's Government are anxious to secure to Spain her rightful place in Europe as one of the Mediterranean Powers, and it is in this spirit that His Majesty's Government would approach any discussions which may appear desirable after the conclusion of hostilities."

*Richmond Terrace, S.W. 1,*  
*October 4, 1940.*
CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10 Downing Street, S.W. 1, on Monday, October 7, 1940, at 5 P.M.

Present:
The Right Hon. WINSTON S. CHURCHILL, M.P., Prime Minister (in the Chair).
The Right Hon. Sir JOHN ANDERSON, M.P., Lord President of the Council.
The Right Hon. A. GREENWOOD, M.P., Minister without Portfolio.
The Right Hon. Sir KINGSLEY WOOD, M.P., Chancellor of the Exchequer.

The following were also present:
The Right Hon. HERBERT MORRISON, M.P., Secretary of State for Home Department and Minister of Home Security.
The Right Hon. LORD LLOYD, Secretary of State for the Colonies (Item 5).
The Right Hon. ANTHONY EDEN, M.P., Secretary of State for War.
The Right Hon. A. DUFF COOPER, M.P., Minister of Information.
Admiral of the Fleet Sir DUDLEY POUND, First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff.

The Right Hon. VISCOUNT HALIFAX, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.
The Right Hon. LORD BEAVERBROOK, Minister of Aircraft Production.
The Right Hon. Sir ARCHIBALD SINCLAIR, Bt., M.P., Secretary of State for Air.
The Right Hon. HUGH DALTON, M.P., Minister of Economic Warfare (Items 1-5).
The Hon. SIR ALEXANDER CADOGAN, Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.
General Sir JOHN DILL, Chief of the Imperial General Staff.

Secretariat.
SIR EDWARD BRIDGES.
MR. W. D. WILKINSON.
MR. L. F. BURGIS.

[21815—1]
SECRET.

W.M. (40)

267th Conclusions.

TO BE KEPT UNDER LOCK AND KEY.

It is requested that special care may be taken to ensure the secrecy of this document.

WAR CABINET 267 (40).

CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10 Downing Street, S.W. 1, on Monday, October 7, 1940, at 5 p.m.

Present:

The Right Hon. WINSTON S. CHURCHILL, M.P., Prime Minister (in the Chair).

The Right Hon. Sir JOHN ANDERSON, M.P., Lord President of the Council.

The Right Hon. A. GREENWOOD, M.P., Minister without Portfolio.

The Right Hon. A. DUFF COOPER, M.P., Minister of Information.

The Right Hon. HERBERT MORRISON, M.P., Secretary of State for the Home Department and Minister of Home Security.

The Right Hon. LORD LLOYD, Secretary of State for the Colonies (Item 5).

The Right Hon. ANTHONY EDEN, M.P., Secretary of State for War.

The Right Hon. A. GREENWOOD, M.P., Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

The following were also present:

The Right Hon. HERBERT MORRISON, M.P., Secretary of State for the Home Department and Minister of Home Security.

The Right Hon. VISCOUNT CRANBORNE, M.P., Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs.

The Right Hon. VISCOUNT HALIFAX, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.


The Right Hon. LORD BEAVERBROOK, Minister of Aircraft Production.

The Right Hon. Sir ARCHIBALD SINCLAIR, Bt., M.P., Secretary of State for Air.

The Right Hon. HUGH DALTON, M.P., Minister of Economic Warfare (Items 1–5).

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The Hon. Sir ALEXANDER CADogan, Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

General Sir JOHN DILL, Chief of the Imperial General Staff.

Secretariat.

Sir EDWARD BRIDGES.
Mr. W. D. WILKINSON.
Mr. L. F. BURGIS.

[21815—1]
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Naval, Military and Air Operations.

(Previous Reference: W.M. (40) 266th Conclusions, Minute 1.)

Air Operations.

1. The Secretary of State for Air said that bad weather had restricted activity on both sides. On the previous day machine-gun attacks had been made on several small towns and villages and R.A.F. stations. The damage had been comparatively slight, but at Northolt several aircraft had been wrecked and offices and hangars had been damaged.

Our aircraft had attacked Diepholz aerodrome and Calais. Two armed merchant vessels had been attacked by three Hudsons off Horn's Reef, but results had not been observed. One of the Hudsons had been lost. The total casualties during the twenty-four hours ended that morning had been—

**Enemy—**
- 2 lost.
- 1 damaged.

**Our Own—**
- 2 lost.

The First Sea Lord reported various Fleet movements. An air reconnaissance of Taranto had shown five Italian battleships in harbour. A British 7,000-ton tanker had been damaged by a torpedo attack the previous evening. We had sunk one Italian U-Boat off Lorient.

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff reported that there was no indication of any early Italian advance on the Western Desert Front. There was no sign of any German formations having arrived in Libya.

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff described our dispositions at Mersa Matruh and Siwa and the Italian dispositions at Sollum and Sidi Barrani, at each of which places two divisions were now present.

The Prime Minister said that this was the first occasion on which the War Cabinet had been informed that as many as four enemy divisions were in forward positions. It was important that they should be notified immediately of the arrival of any new enemy divisions at the Front.

The War Cabinet took note of the above statements.

2. The Foreign Secretary drew attention to Washington telegrams Nos. 2209 and 2212. The first of these telegrams reported Mr. Cordell Hull’s reactions, which had been very satisfactory, to His Majesty’s Government’s message about the reopening of the Burma Road, and about the proposed joint technical discussions on defence in the Pacific. The second telegram reported that the United States Navy Department had inquired how far our base facilities at Singapore could be placed at the disposal of the United States Fleet, in the event of trouble in the Far East. The telegram mentioned specifically the contingencies—

(a) of a hostile Japanese reaction to the reopening of the Burma Road, and

(b) of a threat of Japanese action against the Dutch East Indies, before a Japanese declaration of war.

He was sending an answer, which had been drafted in consultation with the First Lord of the Admiralty, to the effect that the whole of the facilities at Singapore would be at the disposal of the United States Fleet, except in so far as those facilities were needed for our own warships. He had added that, if the Navy Department wanted any further information, they should let us know.
The Prime Minister said that this was a message of the highest importance. It showed how great a mistake Japan had made in affronting the Americans. The Navy Department's message had evidently crossed his own message to President Roosevelt.

The War Cabinet took note of the above statements.

Spain.

Gibraltar.  
(Previous Reference: W.M. (40) 266th Conclusions, Minute 7.)

3. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs drew attention to Madrid telegram No. 829 commenting on the revised draft statement on Anglo-Spanish relations. Sir Samuel Hoare agreed with the revised draft, but wished to insert in paragraph 3 (which dealt with Gibraltar) after "in this spirit" the words "and in the belief that all outstanding questions can be amicably settled between the two countries."

He was disposed to accept Sir Samuel Hoare's amendment and hoped that it might be possible for the Prime Minister to make the statement in the course of his speech on the following day.

The War Cabinet agreed that this amendment should be accepted.

Germany and Italy.

Herr von Ribbentrop's visit to Rome.  
Air operations against Italy.

4. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs drew attention to Ankara telegram No. 1290 containing a report that Herr von Ribbentrop's visit to Rome had been made with the object of keeping Italy in the war. The result was believed to be that Italy would fight on, but not for an indefinite time. The report also mentioned the great moral effect of our bombing of the Northern Italian towns.

The Secretary of State for Air said that these operations would be resumed as soon as the weather permitted.

The War Cabinet took note of these statements.

Blockade Policy.

The Atlantic Coast and the Western Mediterranean.  
(Previous Reference: W.M. (40) 266th Conclusions, Minute 4.)

5. The Foreign Secretary said that, since the discussion in War Cabinet on the 4th October, he had been in consultation with the Minister for Economic Warfare. Taking first the suggestion that we should decide not to hamper trade between Spain and Morocco, the Foreign Secretary said that this trade would be largely with the Atlantic ports of Morocco, and principally with Casablanca. Provided that the trade was on a barter basis, the Minister for Economic Warfare and he saw no objection to allowing it to be opened. Nor did they see objection to a decision not to interfere with trade between the French Mediterranean ports and the French North African ports.

More difficult questions arose in connection with the proposal that the Navy should stop all trade coming to the French Mediterranean ports from the Atlantic whether or not escorted by Vichy Government warships. This trade might come from West Africa, from the Atlantic ports of Morocco or from across the Atlantic.

The Foreign Secretary said that the objects he wished to secure were as follows:—

1. To keep Morocco quiet and prosperous. We might conceivably modify the rigour of our proposed new policy by encouraging Moroccan traders to use Oran instead of Casablanca.

2. To make our contraband control as effective as possible. His Majesty's Representative in Tangier had already reported that there was a growing trickle of trade with France. It would assume larger proportions if we were not careful.
(3) To avoid any unfavourable reactions in Spain, Portugal and the Azores.
(4) To avoid any further retaliatory attacks on Gibraltar.
(5) To avoid any open conflict with Vichy Government warships.

His conclusion was that we should go ahead with our efforts to reach a modus vivendi with Vichy and should attempt to secure, as part of the general arrangements, an agreement regulating the trade between France and the French Colonial Empire. We should have to make it plain to Vichy that we reserved full liberty as to the methods by which we conducted our economic warfare.

The Prime Minister thought that we should tell the French now, through our Ambassador in Madrid, that the trade with the West African ports must stop although we would not interfere with any ships from these ports that were now on their way to French Mediterranean Ports. He was not worried about the trade inside the Mediterranean, which could proceed. The appeasement of Vichy was not worth while if it meant allowing this trade between West African ports and the unoccupied zones of France to go on. He doubted whether, if we stopped this trade, the Vichy Government would provoke an incident. If they bombed Gibraltar we would retaliate by bombarding Casablanca.

The Minister for Economic Warfare said that he agreed with the Prime Minister. It was a reasonably good offer to the Vichy Government not to interfere with trade east of Gibraltar but only with trade through the Straits. So far as barter deals were concerned, they could go free West of Gibraltar. He hoped that the Cabinet realised that trade was already proceeding through the Straits. A French ship with 14,000 tons of crude oil and another said to have aircraft parts had already passed through the Straits. Unless something was done soon our blockade of West African ports would become a farce.

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs said that if we were faced with a choice between obtaining a modus vivendi with Vichy or letting the blockade go, he would maintain the blockade, even if it meant firing on French ships. The problem was how best to play our cards with the Vichy Government. He was quite prepared to say to them that, pending any results from the talks, the Vichy Government must understand that we could not vary our blockade either inside or outside the Mediterranean. But he did not wish us to be forced into the position of having to fire on French ships until our efforts to obtain a modus vivendi had failed. Should the Vichy Government accept our conditions, he would like to discuss with the Minister for Economic Warfare the policy of dealing with the West African trade under a Contraband Control system rather than on the basis of a blockade.

The Minister for Economic Warfare said that he would prefer using a stronger phrase than 'vary the blockade,' for our blockade at this moment was ineffective. In effect the Vichy Government should be told that the trade now passing through the Straits would be stopped.

The Secretary of State for the Colonies attached importance to the immediate stoppage of trade from the West African ports. These ports were now beginning to export their surplus stocks to France. Once they were allowed to do this the value of our blockade pressure would be lost.

The First Sea Lord pointed out that the policy proposed assumed for its success that the French would not bomb us out of Gibraltar. We could not keep heavy ships at Gibraltar without fighter aircraft protection. If we could not keep a Fleet at
Gibraltar, it would be impossible for us to maintain a blockade of the Western end of the Mediterranean with Naval forces based on the United Kingdom and Freetown. The trade with West Africa was not, he thought, of great importance, and it was for consideration whether it was worth while, in order to stop that trade, to take action which involved the risk that the French might bomb us at Gibraltar. He would prefer, therefore, that we should maintain the blockade of Metropolitan France and North Africa as a single unit, stopping, for example, all trade between that unit and America.

The First Sea Lord added that the trade at present passing through the Straits was using Spanish territorial waters. The use of a larger Naval force would be involved if we were to stop ships passing through the Straits before they entered Spanish territorial waters.

Some discussion then took place on the extent of the exports from West African ports. It was suggested that, although the normal trade from these ports might be small, if we allowed trade between these ports and France they might be used as an entrepôt for the French Atlantic trade.

The First Sea Lord added that the trade at present passing through the Straits was using Spanish territorial waters. The use of a larger Naval force would be involved if we were to stop ships passing through the Straits before they entered Spanish territorial waters.

The Prime Minister said that he deprecated the conclusion that the French would react to our blockade of the West African trade by trying to bomb us out of Gibraltar. If we allowed this possibility to influence our policy, we should have to give way to the Vichy Government all along the line. He did not think that Government could carry the French people with it to-day in a policy of war with this country. There was an increasing longing among the people of France for our victory.

The Foreign Secretary suggested that he should telegraph at once to Sir Samuel Hoare, instructing him to tell the French Ambassador that we expected a reply urgently to the communication which we had made through him to the Vichy Government, since, pending the issue of conversations with that Government, we must maintain all our rights of blockade.

In the meantime the Admiralty should continue to collect a Naval force stationed on Gibraltar.

The Prime Minister agreed with this suggestion. For the moment it was not necessary to reach any further decision, but we could not afford to allow trade to continue to pass through the Straits for any length of time while discussions with the Vichy Government continued. He wished to emphasise that, for his part, he was satisfied that we must face the threat of a French attack on Gibraltar if we interfered with their trade through the Straits.

The War Cabinet:

Authorised the Foreign Secretary to send a telegram to our Ambassador at Madrid, on the lines indicated at "X."

6. The Prime Minister drew attention to an article in the Sunday Pictorial on the 29th September. This article, which had contained a lot of false information, had characterised the Dakar affair as "another Blunder," and had used language of an insulting character to the Government. In the issue of the same journal of the previous day (Sunday, the 6th October) great prominence had been given to an article published by Mr. H. G. Wells in an obscure pamphlet (the Bulletin of the Labour Book Service). This article had contained a slashing attack on Field-Marshal Sir Edmund Ironside and General Viscount Gort. The general tenor of Mr. H. G. Well's article, reproduced in the Sunday Pictorial had

The Press.

Subversive articles.
been that, until the Army was better led, we stood no chance of
beating the Germans.

The same issue of the Sunday Pictorial had contained a leading
article by the Editor, containing a scurrilous attack on several
members of the Government, and obviously seeking to undermine
confidence in the Government. Much the same line had been taken
in the leading article in that morning's Daily Mirror.

The immediate purpose of these articles seemed to be to affect
the discipline of the Army, to attempt to shake the stability of the
Government, and to make trouble between the Government and
organised labour. In his considered judgment there was far more
behind these articles than disgruntlement or frayed nerves. They
stood for something most dangerous and sinister, namely, an
attempt to bring about a situation in which the country would be
ready for a surrender peace.

It was not right that anyone bearing his heavy responsibilities
should have to submit to attacks of this nature upon his Govern­
ment. It was intolerable that any newspaper should indulge in
criticism and abuse, far beyond what was tolerated in times of acute
Party strife, in a time of great national peril.

The War Cabinet were informed that the Daily Mirror and the
Sunday Pictorial were owned by a combine. A large number of
shares were held by bank nominees, and it had not been possible to
establish what individual, if any, exercised the controlling financial
interest of the newspaper. It was believed, however, that
Mr. I. Sieff had a large interest in the paper, and that Mr. Cecil
Harmsworth King was influential in the conduct of the paper.

The War Cabinet were also informed by the Attorney-General
as to the legal position under Regulation 2 (d). If the Secretary
of State was satisfied that there was a systematic publication of
matter which, in his opinion, was calculated to foment opposition
to the successful prosecution of the war, he could take steps to stop
the printing, publication and distribution of that paper. Action
under this Regulation would be an executive act of Government and
did not involve Court proceedings. If, however, the Government
also seized the printing presses, action could be taken in the Courts
with a view to obtaining permission to use the printing presses
again.

Discussion ensued as to whether action could be taken in regard
to the article about Field-Marshal Sir Edmund Ironside and
General Viscount Gort under the Regulation which dealt with
intent to seduce troops from obeying their orders. The Attorney-
General pointed out that the Defence Regulation in question dealt
with incitement to disobey orders of a far more direct character
than was contained in this particular article.

The Lord President of the Council said that he was satisfied
that it would be wrong to attempt to stop publication of these
articles by a criminal prosecution in the Courts. If action was
taken it must be executive action, taken under the Defence
Regulations, and any appeal against the action taken would be to
Parliament itself, and not to any court of law. He thought that
whoever was responsible for these newspapers should be given a
clear warning and told that the warning would not be repeated.

In the course of discussion the view was advanced that,
although the articles in question were most objectionable and
scurrilous, to proceed against these newspapers, which made a wide
popular appeal on account of their pictures, might do more harm
than good.

The view generally expressed by the War Cabinet was,
however, that the conduct of these newspapers represented some
unscrupulous and dangerous purpose, the ulterior motive of which
was certainly not the commercial motive of profit, and that the continuance of these malicious articles should not be tolerated.

The Minister of Aircraft Production thought that an approach could properly be made through the Newspaper Proprietors' Association. This Association had considerable disciplinary powers, which he thought they would be prepared to exercise. The Association would realise, at least as strongly as the War Cabinet, the disadvantages of action being taken by the Government to suppress a newspaper, and would wish to avoid recourse to this procedure.

The Home Secretary said that the War Cabinet would appreciate that he was new to this matter, and had not followed the line adopted by these two newspapers. An important Parliamentary issue was involved. If these newspapers were suppressed, it would no doubt be argued in some quarters that suppression had been carried out because criticisms had been made of individual members of the Government or of Generals. The Government would be told that the troubles in France had had their origin in the drastic suppression of all criticism by the French Government. Furthermore, he had a quasi-judicial function to exercise, and he would therefore wish for some further time to consider the matter.

The Lord President of the Council pointed out that the matter need not necessarily be decided by reference to the existing Defence Regulations. While still Home Secretary he had given instructions for a new Regulation to be drafted in somewhat wider terms than the existing Regulation 2 (d).

The Prime Minister, summing up the discussion, said that the solution which he hoped to see adopted and which he thought was generally favoured, was that two members of the War Cabinet should see the Newspaper Proprietors' Association and explain the situation to them. The articles complained of should be shown to the Association, and it should be made clear that the Government was not prepared to allow continued publication of such articles. It should also be made clear that, if the Newspaper Proprietors' Association were not ready or able to take action to stop further publication of such articles, the Government would have to deal with the matter in some other way.

It was clear, however, that, before action could be taken on these lines, the War Cabinets must decide definitely that they were prepared to take action against these newspapers if necessary. In view, however, of the fact that the Home Secretary had a quasi-judicial function to perform, it would clearly be right to defer a decision in order to give him time for further consideration.

The War Cabinet:—

Adjourned the discussion of this question to a later Meeting.

Richmond Terrace, S.W. 1,
October 7, 1940.
CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held in the Prime Minister's Room, House of Commons, S.W. 1, on Wednesday, October 9, 1940, at 12 Noon.

Present:

The Right Hon. WINSTON S. CHURCHILL, M.P., Prime Minister (in the Chair).


The Right Hon. VISCOUNT HALIFAX, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

The Right Hon. LORD BEAVERBROOK, Minister of Aircraft Production.

The Right Hon. HERBERT MORRISON, M.P., Secretary of State for Home Department and Minister of Home Security.


The Right Hon. SIR ARCHIBALD SINCLAIR, Bt., M.P., Secretary of State for Air.

The Right Hon. SIR DONALD SOMERVELL, K.C., M.P., Attorney-General (Item 10).

Admiral of the Fleet SIR DUDLEY POUND, First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff (Items 1-9).

The following were also present:

The Right Hon. SIR ARCHIBALD SINCLAIR, Bt., M.P., Secretary of State for Air.

The Right Hon. ANTHONY EDEN, M.P., Secretary of State for War.

The Right Hon. A. DUFF COOPER, M.P., Minister of Information.

Air Chief Marshal SIR CYRIL L. N. NEWALL, Chief of the Air Staff (Items 1-9).

Lieutenant-General SIR ROBERT HAINING, Vice-Chief of the Imperial General Staff (Items 1-9).

Secretariat.

Sir EDWARD BRIDGES.

Major-General SIR HASTINGS ISMAY.

Mr. W. D. WILKINSON.

Mr. L. F. BURGIS.
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Naval, Military and Air Operations.

(Previous Reference: W.M. (40) 267th Conclusions, Minute 1.)

Air Operations.

1. The Chief of the Air Staff reported that 250 enemy aircraft had operated over this country on the previous morning. Two raids had penetrated to London and dropped bombs in Whitehall. A number of aerodromes had also been attacked.

The previous night the enemy had sent over some 220 machines, 140 of which had attacked the London area. Bombs had hit Southwark Generating Station, the Wandsworth Power Station, and Shoreditch Hospital, where there had been casualties. The causalities for the previous day had been:

- Our own—
  - 4 machines.
  - (4 pilots missing.)

- Enemy—
  - 6 certain (2 by A.A.).
  - 2 probable.
  - 4 damaged.

During the previous night 105 of our aircraft had attacked the invasion ports and various targets in Germany. 4 of our machines had crashed on returning, the crews of 2 being killed. We had also lost 3 photographic machines.

6 Blenheims had made a successful attack on Assab.

The First Sea Lord reported that a further 5 United States Destroyers had arrived at Belfast.

Particulars were given of the position of certain convoys on their way to the Middle East.

At the suggestion of the Prime Minister, the War Cabinet:

- Invited the Admiralty, together with the Ministry of Shipping, to examine the possibility of using some of the large fast ocean-going liners for transport purposes. It might, for instance, be possible to ship troops to, say, Freetown, Capetown or Bermuda in smaller vessels, and then tranship them to faster ships, which would take them to their destination.

The arrival of certain of General de Gaulle's forces at ports in French Equatorial Africa was reported.

The Vice Chief of the Imperial General Staff said that there was nothing to report.

The War Cabinet took note of these statements.

2. At the request of the Prime Minister, the First Lord of the Admiralty undertook to study the possibility of intercepting certain empty cargo ships, which, according to Telegram No. 2223 from Lord Lothian, were on their way to West African ports. It might be easier to intercept these ships on their way to Dakar and Casablanca than after leaving these ports.
United States of America.
Supply of Munitions.
(Previous Reference: W.M. (40) 265th Conclusions, Minute 0.)

Supply of rifles to Eire.
(Previous Reference: W.M. (40) 255th Minute S148.)

Middle East.
Possible German intentions.
(Previous Reference: W.M. (40) 265th Conclusions, Minute 3.)

Roumania.
Detention of British subjects.
(Previous Reference: W.M. (40) 261st Conclusions, Minute 4.)

The Far East.
(Previous Reference: W.M. (40) 207th Conclusions, Minute 2.)

The Burma Road.

Proposed visit of United States warships to Far Eastern waters.

Evacuation of United States citizens and troops.

Singapore Conference.

3. The First Sea Lord said that of the further 250,000 - 300,000 rifles which the United States had agreed to release, the first batch of 50,000 rifles had arrived and the second and third batches of 50,000 were on their way.

The Prime Minister said that when the 20,000 rifles which had been promised to Mr. De Valera were handed over to him, he proposed to send a letter to Mr. De Valera saying that he was confident that these rifles would be used in the defence of Irish hearths and homes and in the cause of freedom.

The War Cabinet took note of these statements.

4. A discussion took place, a record of which, and of the conclusions reached, is contained in the Secretary’s Standard File of War Cabinet Conclusions.

The War Cabinet took note of this statement.

5. The Foreign Secretary said there was no doubt that British subjects were being ill-treated in Roumania. We could not retaliate, as the Roumanians in this country were not supporters of the present Roumanian Government, but he had authorised the British Minister in Bucharest to begin his preparations for leaving Roumania, and for evacuating the remaining British subjects there, if he thought necessary.

The War Cabinet took note of this statement.

6. In a discussion of the Far Eastern Situation, the following points were made:

(1) The interview at which Sir Robert Craigie had informed the Japanese Foreign Minister of the Burma Road decision had passed off satisfactorily.

(2) A telegram from Berne reported that Japanese shipping agents at Lisbon were no longer accepting cargoes for British ports.

(3) The Commander-in-Chief of the China Station had suggested that it would be a good thing if United States warships could pay a visit to Indo-China.

This suggestion was not viewed with favour, since our immediate object was to persuade the United States to send warships to Singapore.

(4) Washington telegram No. 2220 showed that the United States had decided to evacuate their women and children from China and Japan, and their troops from China. Presumably the evacuation would be to the Philippines in the first place.

(5) The Dominions Secretary pointed out that the Dominions were to be represented at the forthcoming Defence Conference at Singapore. It was clearly necessary that
they should also be represented at the Staff Conversations which it was proposed to hold first in London and then in Washington.

(6) Washington telegram No. 2220 also showed that Mr. Cordell Hull was getting impatient about the delay in starting these conversations. The Chief of the Air Staff thought that this telegram must have crossed the telegram (No. 2556) which had been despatched the previous day welcoming these conversations.

The War Cabinet:

(a) Took note of the above statements.
(b) Agreed that the Dominions of Canada, Australia and New Zealand should be represented at the forthcoming Anglo-American Staff Conversations.

7. The Foreign Secretary said that, according to an unconfirmed report, the Germans were sending train-loads of gas into Belgium.

The Prime Minister said that the directions which had been given by the Cabinet in regard to gas preparations had not been fully implemented. He thought that this matter should be enquired into.

The War Cabinet:

Invited the Lord Privy Seal to enquire on their behalf into the reasons why the directions given by the Cabinet on this matter had not been fully carried out.

8. In connection with the preceding Minute, the War Cabinet instructed the Secretary to prepare and submit to them a scheme to secure that any Department which was in default in giving full effect to a decision of the War Cabinet, or found itself unable to do so, was under an obligation to report the matter forthwith to the War Cabinet.

9. The War Cabinet had before them a Memorandum by the Secretary of State for War (W.P. (G.) (40) 253) dealing with a difficulty which had arisen over the number of Polish Army Officers whom the Polish Government desired to see maintained in this country.

The Secretary of State for War said that it would be unfair, not only to the British taxpayers, but also to British Officers and other ranks, if one of the Allied contingents in this country contained a disproportionate number of officers compared with the British forces. General Sikorski wished to maintain some 4,200 Polish Officers here, 3,200 on full rates of pay and 1,000 on lower rates. According to British standards, taking a generous view, only some 1,400 officers were required by the Polish contingents.

The Foreign Secretary pointed out that the high proportion of officers in the Polish contingents was not due to any discreditable reasons. A large number of them had been on the staff of the Polish
War Office. Others were young officers who had been trained in France. He thought that it would be necessary to reach a compromise settlement with General Sikorski. Would it not help the Secretary of State for War if he insisted on satisfying himself as to the military value of these officers?

The Chancellor of the Exchequer pointed out that there would be repercussions on the other Allied contingents if we gave unduly favourable terms to the Poles. He asked to be kept informed of the course of the negotiations.

The War Cabinet:—

Invited the Secretary of State for War to make the best arrangement possible with the Polish Government.

10. The War Cabinet resumed discussion of this question, and had before them a Memorandum by the Home Secretary (W.P. (40) 402) suggesting that, while representations should be made to the Newspaper Proprietors’ Association, this should be in the nature of a friendly appeal and not of a threat of action under the Defence Regulations.

The Prime Minister said that the articles in the Sunday Pictorial and Daily Mirror constituted, in his view, a serious danger to this country. First, these newspapers were trying to “rock the boat” and to shake the confidence of the country in Ministers. Secondly, the effect of the prominence given to Mr. H. G. Wells’s article must be to weaken discipline in the Army. Thirdly, an endeavour was being made to poison relations between members of the Government. It was intolerable that those bearing the burden of supreme responsibility at this time should be subject to attacks of this kind. He was determined to put a stop to these attacks and to obtain protection for the War Cabinet. It would be quite wrong that two members of the War Cabinet should be in the position of asking favours of the Newspaper Proprietors’ Association.

Discussion followed as to who exercised the controlling influence over these newspapers. The War Cabinet were given the names of the Directors, and particulars of the largest shareholders. Most of the Directors had been appointed by Lord Rothermere. But it was understood that he did not play any great part in the conduct of these two newspapers. Large numbers of shares were held by bank nominees.

The Lord Privy Seal attached importance to finding out who had the controlling interest, in order to satisfy himself whether the underlying motive was definitely an attempt to exercise a disrupting influence and not merely irresponsible journalism. He regarded the matter very seriously and favoured strong action, but wanted to be sure that there was a cast-iron case. The Home Secretary was invited to take such steps as were in his power to find out the facts required, although the view was expressed that persons who went to the trouble to put their holdings in the name of bank nominees had probably taken steps to make it very difficult to trace their connection with the paper.

The Lord President of the Council pointed out that, irrespective of the question of motive, the fact remained that grave harm undoubtedly followed from the fact that these malicious articles were published. It was a grave embarrassment to a Home Secretary, who wished to stop mischievous articles in the Press, if powerful newspapers were allowed to publish articles of this kind.
General agreement was expressed by the War Cabinet with the view that the articles in question were highly objectionable, and that, while no-one objected to fair criticism, a continuance of such articles could not be tolerated.

On the other hand, it was said that Mr. Chamberlain's Government (and Mr. Chamberlain himself in particular) had been subject to no less bitter attacks, and it was argued that it would be difficult to find any remedy short of interference with the liberty of the Press.

The Home Secretary pointed out that a number of other newspapers had published articles which, in their way, were just as bad; he quoted an article from the Daily Worker, the effect of which was to dissuade men from going to sea in the Destroyers bought from the United States. There had also been an objectionable article in the New Statesman on the shelter policy, which had virtually identified the Stepney shelter. It was also important to avoid any debate in the House of Commons which might lead to a division on Party lines.

In further discussion it was suggested that the Minister of Aircraft Production and the Lord Privy Seal should summon representatives of the Newspaper Proprietors' Association to see them, and should explain to them that the War Cabinet were considering this whole matter and were gravely perturbed at the position. Before taking any further action, however, the War Cabinet thought it right to lay the matter before the Newspaper Proprietors' Association in order that they might have the opportunity of taking such action as they thought fit.

The Minister of Aircraft Production said that he had felt quite sure that the Newspaper Proprietors as a whole would wish to see action taken to restrain the Daily Mirror and the Sunday Pictorial. These two newspapers were conducted in a manner which was damaging to the repute of newspapers generally. The Newspaper Proprietors' Association had it in their power to exercise disciplinary action, by taking steps which would add substantially to the cost of running the papers; e.g., by refusing to allow these papers to be put on the newspaper trains.

The Prime Minister said that he was prepared to agree to the Minister of Aircraft Production and the Lord Privy Seal sending for representatives of the Newspaper Proprietors' Association and speaking to them on the lines suggested. But he wished it to be clear that, for his part, he receded in no way from the view he had taken, that the Government must be prepared to take firm action to deal with this menace.

The War Cabinet:

(1) Invited the Minister of Aircraft Production and the Lord Privy Seal to send for representatives of the Newspaper Proprietors' Association and to speak to them on the lines indicated at "X," and to report to the War Cabinet.

(2) Invited the Home Secretary to give consideration to an amendment of Defence Regulation 2 (d) on the lines indicated in paragraph 8 of his Memorandum; but not to proceed with this amendment pending receipt of the Report referred to in (1) above.

(3) Invited the Home Secretary to take such steps as were in his power to ascertain who exercised the controlling influence over the Sunday Pictorial and the Daily Mirror.
11. The War Cabinet were informed that the question of supplies of fuel, light and heat, and particularly of coal, had been raised that morning at the Civil Defence Committee. A great deal of work had been done during the summer months to accumulate stocks of coal so as to avoid the difficulties which had been encountered last winter. The effect of enemy bombing on transport facilities, however, seemed likely to give rise to fresh difficulties, and this matter needed to be taken in hand promptly.

The War Cabinet:—

Invited the Lord President of the Council to review the question of supplies of fuel, light and heat, particularly of coal supplies, and to report to the War Cabinet.

*Richmond Terrace, S.W. 1,*  
*October 9, 1940.*
CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held in the Prime Minister's Room, House of Commons, S.W.1, on Thursday, October 10, 1940, at 11.30 A.M.

Present:

The Right Hon. Winston S. Churchill, M.P., Prime Minister (in the Chair).
The Right Hon. Viscount Halifax, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.
The Right Hon. Lord Beaverbrook, Minister of Aircraft Production.

The following were also present:

The Right Hon. Herbert Morrison, M.P., Secretary of State for the Home Department and Minister of Home Security (Item 1).
The Right Hon. Lord Lloyd, Secretary of State for the Colonies (Items 5-9).
The Right Hon. Anthony Eden, M.P., Secretary of State for War.
The Right Hon. A. Duff Cooper, M.P., Minister of Information.

The Right Hon. A. Greenwood, M.P., Minister without Portfolio.

General Sir John Dill, Chief of the Imperial General Staff (Items 5-9).

Secretariat.

Sir Edward Bridges.
Major-General Sir Hastings Ismay.
Mr. W. D. Wilkinson.
Mr. L. F. Burgess.
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The War Cabinet had before them a Memorandum by the Home Secretary (W.P. (G.) (40) 255) covering a draft Bill in two alternative forms:

(a) Prolonging the life of Parliament for one year after 25th November, 1940, and making provision for further prolongations by means of Orders in Council, on the presentation of addresses by both Houses of Parliament.

(b) Prolonging the life of Parliament for one year only.

The Home Secretary preferred the first course, although the second had been followed during the last war.

The Prime Minister and the Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasury favoured the second course, which they thought would be that desired by the House of Commons as a whole.

It was suggested that during the debates on the present Bill, questions such as redistribution, proportional representation, the single transferable vote, etc., might be raised. It was the view of the War Cabinet that it would be wholly inappropriate to deal with such matters during the war.

The War Cabinet—

(a) Invited the Home Secretary to introduce, as soon as possible, a Bill to extend the duration of the present Parliament for one year only.

(b) Agreed that if redistribution and similar matters should be raised during the debates on the Bill, the line to be taken on behalf of the Government should be that such matters could not be considered until the end of the war.

2. The War Cabinet instructed the Secretary to inform the appropriate authorities of their views as follows:

(1) That alternative quarters for meetings of the Houses of Parliament within the neighbourhood of the Palace of Westminster should forthwith be made ready and a scheme submitted for meetings to be held in the alternative quarters by way of rehearsal.

(2) That these arrangements should be completed within the next ten days.

3. The War Cabinet had before them a Memorandum by the First Lord of the Admiralty (W.P. (40) 409) proposing that a notice should be issued to mariners declaring that all vessels navigating within 30 miles of Eritrea, British Somaliland and Italian Somaliland would do so at their risk and peril. It was proposed to instruct the Commander-in-Chief, East Indies, to use his discretion in authorising attacks on shipping and to have due regard to the safety of native dhows and of legitimate shipping entering and leaving the Red Sea.

The War Cabinet—

Approved the action proposed by the First Lord of the Admiralty in W.P. (40) 409.
Air Raid
Warnings.
Effect on
aircraft
production.
(Previous
Reference:
W.M. (40) 256th
Conclusions,
Minute 5.)

Palestine.
Recruitment of
Jewish units for
general service
in the British
Army.
(Previous
Reference:
W.M. (40) 39th
Conclusions,
Minute 13.)

4. The War Cabinet had before them two Memoranda by the
Minister of Aircraft Production circulated as W.P. (40) 408.
Reference was made to the strike which had been in progress
at Coventry for more than a fortnight. Public feeling was said to
be running high against the strikers.

The discussion was adjourned until the Minister of
Labour and National Service could be present.

5. The War Cabinet had before them a Memorandum by the
Secretary of State for War (W.P. (40) 404) asking for approval for
a proposal to raise Jewish units for general service in the British
Army.

In discussion the following points were made:—

(1) The Secretary of State for War said that the proposal had
originated with Dr. Weizmann. The arrangements
now recommended for Cabinet approval had been
agreed with the Colonial Secretary and with
Dr. Weizmann. 10,000 Jews were to be recruited for
incorporation in special Jewish units. Not more than
3,000 of these would be drawn from Palestine. Most
of the rest would be drawn from the United States,
although some would be refugees from Germany.

The view was expressed that it was right and
natural that Jews who had been maltreated by
the enemy should be given an opportunity to take up arms
against them.

(2) It was suggested that the assent of the United States
Government would be required before organised
recruiting for our Army could take place in that
country.

(3) We
must not run the risk of a propaganda outcry being
raised that the Jews, who were responsible for the
outbreak of the war, were now seeking to drag
America into their quarrel.

(4) It was generally agreed that there could be no question
of a Jewish recruiting campaign being opened in the
United States until after the Presidential Election.

The Minister of Aircraft Production doubted the
wisdom of this country recruiting Jews in America
even after the election.

(5) There might have been advantages in arranging for the
Jewish units to be trained in the Middle East.
Dr. Weizmann, however, had not advocated this, which
would have inflamed feeling among the Arabs. Again,
when the training of the Jewish units was complete,
it would seem natural for them to go to the Middle
East. But no commitments could be entered into to
this effect at the present stage.

(6) The Colonial Secretary said that he had, in deference to
the views held in the Cabinet on White Paper policy,
done all he could with Dr. Weizmann, on the one hand,
and others concerned, on the other, to arrive at a plan
for Jewish armed co-operation in the war, always
provided that Jewish units were recruited not as a
Jewish army, but for general service in the British
Army. None the less the situation in the Middle
East and the Moslem world was becoming daily more
critical, and, unless both the timing of the recruitment
as well as the presentation of this project were put
forward with the greatest care, he believed that there was a serious danger that Moslem feeling in the Middle East and, indeed, beyond it, would be inflamed and grave danger result. He felt it his duty to warn the Cabinet of the importance of doing nothing to upset Moslem feeling. This had been continually stressed by every important British authority without exception in the areas concerned. He did not ask that the proposal under consideration should be abandoned, but that it should be deferred until the highly critical situation now present in the Middle East cleared up or developed.

(6) The Foreign Secretary was clear that there could be no question now of abandoning the scheme. Nevertheless, he was somewhat anxious lest Dr. Weizmann should use injudicious methods in his recruiting campaign in America. In particular, it was most undesirable that there should be any appeals to "come and defend Palestine."

The War Cabinet—

(a) Gave general approval in principle to the proposals in W.P. (40) 404.
(b) Decided that the measures necessary to give effect to the scheme set out in this Paper would have to be further considered after the United States Presidential Election.
(c) Invited the Secretary of State for the Colonies (on behalf of the Secretary of State for War) to see Dr. Weizmann and inform him of the above decisions. Dr. Weizmann should also be informed that no announcement must be made, and no action taken, in this matter until after the Presidential Election.
(d) Agreed that it should be impressed on Dr. Weizmann that no guarantee could be given as to the theatre in which the force, when trained and equipped, would serve.

6. The Chief of the Air Staff reported that on the previous day there had been three main enemy attacks, of which two had penetrated to London and one had crossed over Kent and the Thames Estuary. It was believed that these attacks had been made by Messerschmitts 109's.

Casualties had been:

Our own—

1 machine (pilot safe).

Enemy—

4 certain.
4 probable.
5 damaged.

On the previous night the enemy air activity had been rather heavier than usual, and amongst places hit was St. Paul's Cathedral, where the choir and altar had been badly damaged.

Discussion ensued as to whether publicity should be given to the damage to St. Paul's. It was important not to give the enemy information of operational value by publishing reports of damage caused. It was noticeable that the enemy had ceased to give particulars of the damage which we had caused in Germany.
The Chief of the Air Staff saw no objection to publication in this case of the fact that St. Paul's had been hit, provided this was not taken as a ruling of general application.

The War Cabinet agreed—

That full publicity should be given to the attack on St. Paul's Cathedral, including photographs of the damage done. The time at which the attack had taken place should not, however, be stated.

On the previous night our bomber aircraft had attacked Calais and marshalling yards in Germany. A number of propaganda leaflets had also been dropped in occupied France.

The First Sea Lord reported that the Oronsay, which had been bombed on the 8th October, had now reached the Clyde.

Three merchant ships totalling 18,000 tons had been sunk on the previous day, and another of 4,000 tons damaged. It was hoped to bring this last ship into port.

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff reported that air reconnaissance had reported an advance by three enemy columns, consisting of 200 motor transports and tanks from Bir Enbar. After proceeding some 15 miles eastward the column had turned round and withdrawn towards the point from which they had started. This would appear to have been a reconnaissance in force. Elements of our mobile force were keeping the enemy under observation.

There had been some movement by enemy forces from Kurmuk. This probably represented an attempt to strengthen their left, possibly as a preliminary to a thrust towards the railway.

The War Cabinet took note of the above statements.

7. The First Lord of the Admiralty referred to telegram No. 2223 from Washington as to the interception of empty cargo ships on their way to West African ports. With the forces at present available it was difficult to maintain an effective blockade of both Dakar and of Libreville. To which port should preference be given?

The Prime Minister thought that this matter had better be considered at a meeting to be specially arranged.

The War Cabinet took note of this statement.

8. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs referred to telegram No. 840 from Sir Stafford Cripps, containing a further suggestion for settling the points at issue between this country and the Soviet Government in regard to the assets of the Baltic States. Sir Stafford's suggestion was ingenious. It was, however, a cardinal principle of our policy that we should endeavour to carry the United States Government with us, and the first step was to satisfy ourselves that they would not see serious objection to a settlement on the lines proposed.

Subject to this, he was disposed to allow Sir Stafford to attempt to reach a settlement with the U.S.S.R. on the lines of his proposal.

The War Cabinet—

Approved generally the course of action proposed by the Foreign Secretary.
9. Reference was made to a number of reports as to possible German intentions.

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs referred to a report indicating that the German military authorities had been studying the possibility of action in Greece and Yugoslavia, and that an attempt to invade this country had been postponed until the Spring of 1941.

The Prime Minister said that evidence was still accumulating that preparations for invasion were still going forward and that it would be premature to dismiss the possibility of an attempt being made. Nevertheless, we should have to consider in the near future the extent to which we could afford to reinforce the Middle East at the expense of this country.

Reference was also made to the report that General Keitel had gone to Libya. There was no confirmation of this rumour.

The War Cabinet took note of the above statements.

*Richmond Terrace, S.W. 1,
October 16, 1940.*
270th Conclusions.

TO BE KEPT UNDER LOCK AND KEY.

It is requested that special care may be taken to ensure the secrecy of this document.

WAR CABINET 270 (40).

CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held in the Cabinet War Room, S.W. 1, on Monday, October 14, 1940, at 5 p.m.

Present:

The Right Hon. WINSTON S. CHURCHILL, M.P., Prime Minister (in the Chair).


The Right Hon. VISCOUNT HALIFAX, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

The Right Hon. LORD BEAVERBROOK, Minister of Aircraft Production.

The Right Hon. ERNEST BEVIN, M.P., Minister of Labour and Minister of National Service.

The following were also present:

The Right Hon. HERBERT MORRISON, M.P., Secretary of State for the Home Department and Minister of Home Security.


The Right Hon. ERNEST BROWN, M.C., M.P., Secretary of State for Scotland (Items 6 and 7).

The Right Hon. A. DUFF COOPER, M.P., Minister of Information.

Marshal of the Royal Air Force
SIR CYRIL L. N. NEWALL, Chief of the Air Staff (Items 1-5).

General SIR JOHN DILL, Chief of the Imperial General Staff (Items 1-5).

The Right Hon. VISCOUNT CRANBORNE, M.P., Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs.

The Right Hon. SIR ARCHIBALD SINCLAIR, Bt., M.P., Secretary of State for Air.

The Right Hon. MALCOLM MACDONALD, M.P., Minister of Health (Items 6 and 7).

The Hon. SIR ALEXANDER CADOGAN, Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Items 1-5).

Admiral of the Fleet SIR DUDLEY FOUNT, First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff (Items 1-5).

Air Vice-Marshal R. H. PECK, Assistant Chief of the Air Staff (Items 1-5).

Secretariat.

SIR EDWARD BRIDGES.
Major-General SIR HASTINGS ISMAY.
Mr. W. D. Wilkinson.
Mr. L. F. BURGIS.
## WAR CABINET 270 (40).

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Naval, Military and Air Operations.

(Previous Reference: W.M. (40) 269th Conclusions, Minute 6.)

Air Operations.

Naval Operations: Mediterranean.

Enemy attacks on shipping.

(Previous Reference: W.M. (40) 268th Conclusions, Minute 8.)

Rifles from the United States.

(Previous Reference: W.M. (40) 268th Conclusions, Minute 9.)

Enemy minelaying.

Military Operations: Egypt.

Italian dispositions.

(Previous Reference: W.M. (40) 267th Conclusions, Minute 1.)

Sudan.

Iceland.

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1. The Chief of the Air Staff reported that between 200-250 enemy aircraft had operated over this country on the previous day. On the previous night the total had been some 250. The main concentration had again been on London, though Liverpool had received considerable attention.

On the previous night we had despatched 127 bombers, but they had only been able to engage their secondary targets owing to bad visibility.

The First Sea Lord reported that four Tribal class destroyers had attacked enemy shipping off the South-west Coast of Norway during the night 13/14th, and had sunk two escort vessels and three merchant ships.

No report of recent operations had yet been received from the Commander-in-Chief, Mediterranean, as the Fleet was still at sea. The Italians acknowledged, however, that we had sunk two torpedo-boat destroyers and one destroyer.

Reports had recently been received of successful actions by our submarines in the Mediterranean. On 15th August H.M.S. Orion had sunk a transport of about 3,000 tons in the Straits of Otranto. Towards the end of September H.M.S. Truant had sunk a ship of about 8,000 tons off Naples and H.M.S. Pandora had sunk a ship of 500 tons off Benghazi.

On 29th September two Swordfish aircraft had attacked an enemy convoy consisting of two ships west of Tobruk with torpedoes. Two explosions had been seen followed by columns of smoke from one of the ships.

On the previous day 11,000 tons of shipping had been sunk by enemy action, but that day we had lost only one Greek ship of 5,500 tons.

The First Lord of the Admiralty stated that for the week ending 7th October we had lost 31,000 tons of shipping. This was a great improvement on the previous weeks.

The S.S. Empire Audacity had safely arrived in port with 50,000 rifles from the United States of America, although the convoy in which she had sailed had been attacked.

The First Lord added that our minesweepers were now sweeping up large numbers of mines. Evidently the enemy were sowing very large quantities of mines round our coasts.

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff stated that increased M.T. activity had been reported in the Barrani area and the arrival of a further division had been reported, making three in all in that area. Between Benghazi and our Own Front the Italians had now some six divisions.

The First Lord of the Admiralty referred to a report which had been received to the effect that six light mobile German divisions were now passing through Italy on their way to Libya.

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff gave particulars of our own and Italian strength in tanks on the Egyptian front, and of reinforcements on their way to the Middle East.

In the Kassala Sector the enemy had been engaged by a mechanised patrol and suffered casualties amounting to 18 killed. Our casualties had been 1 killed and 1 wounded.

Lord Gort was on his way to Iceland to carry out an inspection of our troops on the island.

The War Cabinet took note of the above statements.
2. The War Cabinet were informed that the Secretary of State for War had arrived in Cairo that afternoon.

Discussion ensued as to whether any attempt should be made to keep his visit secret. The view generally expressed was that, as the visit was certain to become known, it was probably right to announce the Secretary of State's arrival in Egypt. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs undertook to telegraph to Sir Miles Lampson to make sure that the same line was adopted on this matter here and in Egypt. The Foreign Secretary added that he had asked the Secretary of State for War, during his visit to Egypt, to discuss with Sir Miles Lampson and General Wavell the possibility of our taking over some of the equipment now held by the Egyptian Army in the event of that Army proving unreliable. He was also telegraphing to the Secretary of State to ask him to take up the question of a declaration of war by Egypt.

The War Cabinet took note of the above statements.

3. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs gave the War Cabinet the following information:

The Roumanian Government had decided to liberate four, and to expel from Roumania two, of the British subjects now under detention in that country.

The upshot of the telegrams received from Sir Samuel Hoare was that Señor Suner's mission to Germany and Italy had been a failure.

The Foreign Secretary invited the attention of his colleagues to telegram 865 from Sir Stafford Cripps suggesting a line of policy in order to persuade the Soviet Union to adopt at least a benevolent neutrality towards Turkey and Iran. The Foreign Secretary thought that there was a good deal to be said for acting on the lines suggested by Sir Stafford Cripps, provided that we kept in line with United States policy. He asked his colleagues to study this telegram with a view to further discussion of the matter on the following day.

Telegrams 2241 and 2265 from Washington showed that the State Department was opposed to anything like a conference, either in Washington, London or Singapore, at the present time. A reply to these telegrams was being despatched proposing that arrangements should be made for the exchange of technical information.

The War Cabinet took note of these statements.
The causes of loss of working time in Munitions Factories.

4. The War Cabinet had before them—

Memorandum by the Minister of Aircraft Production (W.P. (40) 408).

Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Air and the Minister of Home Security, covering a Report by a committee under the chairmanship of Air Vice-Marshal R. H. Peck, appointed to review the air raid warning system (W.P. (40) 417).

Reports on the time lost in Government Departments during air raids (W.P. (G.) (40) 256 and 265).

The Minister of Labour and National Service said that his investigations showed that the air raid warning system was only one of a variety of causes leading to the loss of working time in factories working for the Ministry of Supply and the Ministry of Aircraft Production. Other causes were faulty management, lack of consideration in handling men, and bad lay-out of factories. At Euxton, for example, the men had long distances to walk in exposed conditions between the railway station and their workshops.

It was necessary to deal with the problem of output as a whole, factory by factory, as the question of the siren could not be dealt with in isolation. He was confident that he and his department would be able to secure a considerable increase in production.

The Minister of Aircraft Production thought the problem of the siren needed to be dealt with urgently, in isolation from general factory conditions. He wanted to see a declaration made in terms that would persuade the men to stay at their benches after the “alert” warning.

In discussion, it was pointed out that the incidence of air raids varied greatly in different parts of the country. In the Midlands there was little or no reason for any interruption of work. In London and Liverpool, areas which furnished most of the examples given in W.P. (40) 408, several factories had suffered direct hits. This had a temporary effect on production, but the men soon pulled themselves together and production rose again.

The Minister of Aircraft Production said that in his judgment the worst flaw in the existing system was the working of shifts originally planned on the assumption of long hours of daylight. If these shifts were not adjusted to meet winter conditions, there would be a serious fall off in output. The first-class machine tools which we now possessed must be in continuous use.

The Minister without Portfolio pointed out that there had been an increase in output in the aircraft industry since the week referred to in W.P. (40) 408 (the week ending 28th September).

Air Vice-Marshal Peck explained the recommendations in his Report. His Committee had been appointed in pursuance of the Cabinet direction that a review should be made of the air raid warning system, and that the possibility of introducing a supplemental system of localized area warnings should be examined.

The War Cabinet—

(c) Gave a general approval to the recommendations of the Air Raid Warning Committee for improving the present system contained in W.P. (40) 417, as summarized in paragraph 21, subject to (b) and (c) below.
Approved the appointment of Alarm Officers for each Observer Group Centre as suggested in paragraph 21 (iv) subject to further consideration being given to the question whether these Officers should be appointed by the Ministry of Home Security rather than by the Air Ministry. It was suggested that on general grounds it would be preferable that one Department should be responsible for the whole of the air raid warning organisation.

(e) Invited the Committee to report, after further investigation, on the practicability of providing mechanical listening devices for the assistance of roof-watchers.

(d) Took note of the Air Raid Warning Committee's rider that their recommendation for the issue of "alarms within the alert" was made on the basis that such a scheme could not be universally applied, and that requests for inclusion in the scheme which could not be met must be resisted. It would be difficult, though not necessarily impossible, for such a scheme to be applied in London.

(e) Took note that the Minister of Labour and National Service was willing, if so invited by the Supply Ministers, to examine the position at any munitions factory, with a view to eliminating conditions leading to loss of working time.

Air Raids.

Payment of overtime in the baking industry.

5. In connection with the preceding discussion, The Minister of Labour and National Service informed the War Cabinet that an informal arrangement had recently been made in the Baking Industry by which men were to receive time and a half for working during air raid warnings. His Department had, of course, no official cognizance of this arrangement.

It was pointed out in discussion that the arrangement was contrary to the national interest, and if not speedily brought to an end would be a dangerous precedent.

The Minister thought that the best plan would be for him to see the representatives of the two sides at a very early date and endeavour to persuade them to bring the arrangement to an end.

The War Cabinet—

Invited the Minister of Labour and National Service to act on the lines proposed.

The Means Test.

6. The War Cabinet had before them memoranda by the Minister of Labour and National Service, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Lord Privy Seal and a joint memorandum by the Secretary of State for Scotland and the Minister of Health (W.P. (G.) (40) 259, 261, 263 and 264).

In discussion it was pointed out that the abnormal movements of the population, due to air raids, had resulted in artificial households. To retain the Household Means Test in these circumstances might give rise to great bitterness.

A number of Parliamentary Questions on the matter had already been postponed, but the subject was certain to be raised when the new Assistance Regulations were taken in the House. On present arrangements these would be taken in the ensuing week. One suggestion was that the Minister of Labour should say that the whole question of the Household Means Test was under examination by the Government.
It was pointed out, however, that a statement of this kind would almost certainly be taken to mean that the Household Means Test would not be maintained, at any rate in its present form, and would thus prejudge a decision.

While it was the unanimous wish of the War Cabinet that the whole question should be examined in a sympathetic spirit, it was pointed out that the issues involved were at once complex and of considerable importance. An alteration in the Means Test for Unemployment Assistance and Supplementary Pensions would probably involve a similar alteration in regard to non-contributory Old Age Pensions and also Public Assistance payments.

As regards procedure, it was agreed that an examination by experts was necessary. But it was felt that it would be helpful to have a meeting of Ministers for preliminary discussion of the issues involved, in order to provide the Departmental officials with a better indication of the lines on which their examination should proceed.

The War Cabinet agreed as follows:—

(1) A special meeting of the Lord President's Committee should be held at an early date, to which other Ministers concerned should be invited.

(2) This meeting should conduct a preliminary survey of the issues involved, and frame a remit to facilitate examination of the issue involved by a Committee of Officials.

(3) Until this examination had been carried out, and the War Cabinet had reached a decision in principle, no announcement should be made that the Household Means Test was under examination by the Government.

(4) The examination should be carried out with the utmost expedition consistent with a thorough investigation of the points involved.

(5) In view of (3), the date when the new Assistance Regulations were brought up in the House of Commons should be postponed.

Gas.

Supplies in London.

(Previous Reference: W.M. (40) 206th Conclusions, Minute 11.)

7. The Lord President of the Council reported that he had examined the position of gas supplies in London, in consultation with the President of the Board of Trade. The position was not perhaps quite so bad as had been painted, although one-eighth of the consumers in London were cut off from supplies. This position had been static for some days. At the present moment the limiting factor was distribution, much of the trouble being due to the presence of water in the mains.

The Companies had pooled their resources in a single group, under the General Manager of the Gas Light and Coke Company. The position in regard to materials for repairs was satisfactory, but although 10,000 to 12,000 men were constantly engaged on repairs, there was some shortage of skilled labour. The Companies badly needed to get back some of their skilled men from the Army. This point was being taken up with the War Office. A number of Royal Engineer Companies were also being employed on this work. The Board of Trade were hoping to improvise pumps to make good a shortage of pumps for getting water out of the mains. It was hoped to effect a steady improvement on the distribution side, in which case before long the limiting factor would be production.
Two points arose in regard to production. The first was some relaxation of lighting restrictions. The second concerned ventilation in retort-houses under black-out conditions. Both these points were being taken up by the Ministry of Home Security.

The Lord President of the Council added that he was obtaining a weekly appreciation of the position, together with daily reports of any important alterations in the position. He would keep the War Cabinet informed of the situation.

The War Cabinet took note of this statement.

*Richmond Terrace, S.W. 1.*

*October 14, 1940.*
CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held in the Cabinet War Room, S.W. 1, on Tuesday, October 15, 1940, at 5 P.M.

Present:

The Right Hon. Winston S. Churchill, M.P., Prime Minister (in the Chair).
The Right Hon. Viscount Halifax, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.
The Right Hon. Lord Beaverbrook, Minister of Aircraft Production.
The Right Hon. Lord Bevan, M.P., Minister of Labour and Minister of National Service.

The following were also present:

The Right Hon. Sir Andrew Duncan, M.P., Minister of Supply (Item 6).
The Right Hon. A. Duff Cooper, M.P., Minister of Information.

Marshal of the Royal Air Force Sir Cyril L. N. Newall, Chief of the Air Staff.
Vice-Admiral T. S. V. Phillips, Vice-Chief of Naval Staff.

The Right Hon. A. Greenwood, M.P., Minister without Portfolio.
The Right Hon. Ernest Bevin, M.P., Minister of Foreign Affairs.
The Right Hon. Sir Archibald Sinclair, Bt., M.P., Secretary of State for Air.
The Right Hon. Sir John Reith, M.P., Minister of Works and Public Buildings and First Commissioner of Works (Item 6).
The Hon. Sir Alexander Cadogan, Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Items 1-4).
General Sir John Dill, Chief of the Imperial General Staff.

Air Marshal Sir Christopher Courtney, Air Member for Supply and Organisation.

Secretariat:

Sir Edward Bridges.
Major-General Sir Hastings Ismay.
Mr. W. D. Wilkinson.
Mr. L. F. Burgis.

[21828—2]
## WAR CABINET 271 (40).

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Naval, Military
and Air
Operations.

(Previous
Reference:
W.M. (40) 270th
Conclusions,
Minute 1.)

1. The Chief of the Air Staff reported that the attacks by
our heavy bombers on central and eastern Germany and on
selected targets in the Berlin area on the previous night had been
very successful. Three of our bombers had failed to return and
four had crashed on landing, the crew of one machine being killed.
The casualties for that day’s operations over this country up
to date had been:

Our own—
4 machines (4 pilots safe).

Enemy—
9 certain.

150 enemy machines had taken part in the previous night’s
operations over this country, of which 100 had attacked London.
The enemy machines had come over in batches of five and six,
instead of singly as on previous occasions. It was feared that
casualties in the London area had been heavy,

The Vice-Chief of Naval Staff reported that H.M.S. Cheshire
had been torpedoed west of Bloody Foreland on the evening of
the 14th, but was now proceeding to the Clyde under her own
steam.

The French destroyer Fleuret, escorting three French merchant
vessels, had passed Gibraltar from west to east on the morning
of the 14th. The Fleuret had returned westward a little later.

During the recent sweep in the Mediterranean H.M.S. Ajax
had sunk three Italian destroyers. The Italians claim to have
damaged one of our cruisers was untrue. During this sweep
four enemy aircraft had been shot down for certain and probably
two more.

H.M. submarine Trident had reported that she had sunk an
enemy U-boat off Lorient on the morning of the 8th October.

H.M.A.S. Parramatta escorting a convoy in the Red Sea had
been bombed on the 14th instant, but no damage had been
reported.

The S.S. Hurunui (British) 10,028 tons had been torpedoed
and sunk west of the Butt of Lewis on the evening of the 14th.

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff reported that the
situation in Egypt, the Sudan and East Africa were generally
quiet. The western desert railway had been bombed at Fuja by
the enemy on the 13th, causing some native casualties, but no
damage. A column of M.T’s had moved about 20 miles down the
Matruh road from Sidi Barrani and had then turned back.

General Malletti was in command of an Italian desert force,
which appeared to be concentrating in Giara rub, possibly with
the intention of raiding Siwa. There were indications of possible
enemy movements in the area either in Siwa or perhaps further
south.

The War Cabinet took note of the above statements.

[21828—2]
2. The Prime Minister said that it would be premature to suppose that the danger of invasion had passed. Intelligence Reports indicated that enemy plans were still moving forward. In these circumstances it would not be possible for the Navy to withdraw any more of their forces from the invasion front in order to strengthen shipping escorts in the north-west approaches.

The War Cabinet took note of this statement.

3. Discussion followed on the effect of night bombing on civilian morale. The view was advanced that the civilian population in London were beginning to wonder whether we were hitting back hard enough at Germany in our bombing operations. If this feeling was allowed to grow it might have an unfortunate effect on our war effort. It would be of the greatest advantage if the public could be made to realise that a resolute effort was being made to check night bombing.

The Prime Minister said that those concerned were straining every nerve to improve means of countering night bombing. There were good prospects that our defensive measures would be greatly improved within the next two or three months. In the meantime we were retaliating as effectively as we could on Germany. But our Bomber Force was much smaller than that of the enemy, and had to make far longer journeys. Meanwhile the people of this country must stick it out. No doubt they realised that Hitler was trying to break morale over here. He (the Prime Minister) would consider whether it would be desirable for him to make another broadcast speech.

In further discussion, it was suggested that if more publicity could be given by way of photographs of the results of our bombing in Berlin, it would have a good effect. Another suggestion was that it would be worth considering whether a document could be published containing extracts from the reports as to the effect of our bombing in Germany, without compromising the sources of this information.

The War Cabinet—

Took note of this discussion, and invited the Minister of Information in consultation with the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and the Secretary of State for Air to consider the suggestions at "X."

4. The War Cabinet considered Moscow telegram No. 865, in which Sir Stafford Cripps asked for authority to make a new approach to the Soviet Government, together with a draft reply prepared in the Foreign Office, the text of which is on record in the Secretary's Standard File of War Cabinet Conclusions.

In discussion the following points were made:

(1) The Foreign Secretary said that he had at first thought that we ought first to find out if the United States Government agreed with the line we proposed to take. On second thoughts he thought it would be enough to send Lord Lothian a copy of our telegram to Moscow with a short explanation of the reasons for our action.

General agreement was expressed with this view. It was unlikely that the United States Government would commit themselves far until after the Presidential Election.
(2) We should compromise both our present and our post-war position if we were to make any statement implying de jure recognition of the Russian aggressions in Eastern Europe. But there was a case for recognising a de facto situation which we should be unable to alter at any rate until the end of the war.

(3) It would be imprudent to build any hopes on the outcome of a new approach to Russia, which was mainly influenced by fear of Germany. Nevertheless, it was right that at the present juncture one more approach to Russia should be made, and that it should be on record that we had made it.

The War Cabinet—

Gave a general approval to the instructions to Sir Stafford Cripps contained in the draft telegram before them.

5. The War Cabinet were reminded that, following the discussion on the 30th August, a revised programme had been agreed for the despatch of aircraft and pilots to Canada and South Africa. A number of moves had taken place in August, September and October, in accordance with the programme, and the Secretary of State for Air had undertaken to come to the War Cabinet early in October for authority to complete it (W.P. (40) 851). The Prime Minister said that the Secretary of State for Air now wished to carry out a further instalment of the scheme. This involved a move of one School only, which involved only 10 pilots. Aircraft for this school would be supplied from America. In addition, it was proposed to send to Canada about 30 Ansons and 27 Battles required for the five schools already sent overseas. He understood that the Minister of Aircraft Production was still opposed to sending pilots and aircraft out of the country. It seemed, however, to him (the Prime Minister) that the arguments in favour of sending Flying Training Schools overseas had certainly not diminished since this proposal had first been made. The objection to sending pilots and aircraft out of this country, of course, remained; but if we did not adopt this course, we ran a great risk that we should not see the hoped-for increase in the Royal Air Force next spring.

The Minister of Aircraft Production thought that the experience since this scheme had first been proposed last summer reinforced the objections. The training of pilots in this country had been carried on successfully in the meantime, and there was much to be said for training pilots under the conditions to which they would have to accustom themselves.

The Secretary of State for Air said that while the output of trained pilots had increased by 25 per cent. in the months of June and July, and by 50 per cent. in August and September, the output was still below what was required for the expansion of the Royal Air Force. If the present proposal was agreed to, he would again bring the matter to the War Cabinet early in November before proceeding with any further transfers overseas in respect of flying training schools.
After some discussion, the Prime Minister said that he thought the general feeling of the War Cabinet was that it would not be right to override the considered view of one of the Service Ministers in favour of the small further measure of transfer overseas now proposed.

The War Cabinet—

(1) Agreed to the transfer overseas of No. 10 Service Flying Training School, and to the shipment of approximately 60 aircraft to the five Schools already abroad.

(2) Agreed that the programme for the despatch of aircraft and pilots to Canada and South Africa, under the scheme for the transfer abroad of Flying Training Schools, should be further considered by the War Cabinet early in November.

6. The War Cabinet had before them Memoranda by the Secretary of State for Air and the Minister without Portfolio. (W.P. (40) 415 and W.P. (G) (40) 282.)

The Prime Minister stated the case for the Army in the absence of the Secretary of State for War. The Army feared that the new Air Ministry demand for cement might result in some reduction of their own allocation. The proposed allocation for the Army itself for the period October to December, 1940, was only 205,850 tons, compared with requirements of 366,601 tons. If it were cut again, it would be at the cost of our coast defences, of the defences of Malta and Gibraltar, and of other vital works.

The Minister without Portfolio said that he was in the unenviable position of taking decisions which could please nobody. The revised allocation which he had approved had been made in the light of all the relevant considerations, including the approved programme of 125 additional aerodromes and the latest shelter policy. Within the last few days he had received information as to the probable supply position which justified him in increasing the total allocations for the quarter by 50,000 tons. He recommended that this should be added to the Air Ministry allocation, increasing it to 434,515 tons. He saw no way, consistent with the maintenance of other essential services, of increasing the Air Ministry allocation above this figure.

The Minister suggested that the Secretary of State for Air might see his way to revise his cement requirement for perimeter tracks. It was for consideration whether these ought not to be constructed in tarmac, where soil was suitable and material available, even where the runways must be of concrete.

It must be remembered that air raid damage might reduce the quantity of cement manufactured or transported. This made it essential to eliminate the waste of which the cement-using Departments were at times guilty. For example, the mixture was often too rich, and the buildings constructed too heavy.

The Secretary of State for Air said that he would be in default if he failed to carry out the additional programme of 125 aerodromes. It was impossible for him to do so with his present allocation. His advice was that the cement requirement for perimeter tracks could not be further reduced. Tarmac was already largely used in constructing perimeter tracks.
The Minister of Home Security said that he must press for his original requirement of 514,000 tons. The heavy raids on London made it essential to speed up the shelter programme.

The Minister of Labour and National Service thought that the position would be eased if labour and materials were concentrated on finishing works which were approaching completion.

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff drew attention to the possibility of additional supplies of cement becoming available from Northern Ireland.

The Prime Minister did not question that the Air Ministry had a good case for their original requirement. Other Departments also had good cases, and it became a question of cutting one's coat according to one's cloth. He proposed that the War Cabinet should authorise the Minister without Portfolio to make his adjudication. He would assess the competing claims of the Air Ministry, the Ministry of Home Security and the other Departments in the light of the strategic position.

The Secretary of State for Air said that training in the United Kingdom would necessarily be restricted if his allocation could not be increased. It would become more essential than before to send Flying Training Schools overseas.

The War Cabinet—

Authorised the Minister without Portfolio to take the final decisions on the allocations of cement for the current quarter.

Richmond Terrace, S.W. 1,
October 15, 1940.
October, 1940.

Sir S. Cripps,
MOSCOW.

[Signature]

October, 1940.

Your telegram No. 865 of October 13th:

1. I authorise you to make approach to Soviet Government on lines you suggest. The following points seem to me important, and I should like you to have them in mind.

(i) I think Soviet Government should give some practical proof of benevolent neutrality towards Turkey and Iran, both before and during German attack on Turkey, should that mature - that is to say, they should not merely be passive spectators but should facilitate Turkish defence by all steps consistent with technical neutrality. This is most important. From point of view of Far East, (though I recognise that if Russia is to take risks in Europe by being benevolent to Turkey, she may want to reinsure herself in Far East) it would also be very undesirable that Soviet Government should make any pact with Japan which involved cessation or diminution of their supplies to China (see your telegram No. 888), and which would relieve Japan of all anxiety in the north, thus enabling her to press down upon us and the Dutch in the South. I recognise of course all the difficulty of playing this very delicate hand, but if "benevolent neutrality" is to have no such practical consequences, I should fear that your plan might not improbably result in our giving far-reaching/
IMMEDIATE

Your letter of 30th May 1945

Referring to your letter of the 30th May 1945, I have the honour to inform you that the British Government has decided to follow up the statement made by His Majesty King George VI on 28th May in the following manner:

1. The British Government has given the following instructions:

   a) To continue the issue of food to the population of the country in accordance with the terms of the declaration made on 28th May.
   b) To ensure the transfer of all necessary supplies to the population in the occupied areas.
   c) To promote the development of the economy and industry in the occupied areas.

2. The British Government has also decided to take the following measures:

   a) To establish a committee of experts to study the situation in the occupied areas.
   b) To establish a system of control to ensure the implementation of the declared measures.

3. The British Government has further decided to take the following steps:

   a) To establish a system of checkpoints to control the movement of personnel and goods.
   b) To establish a system of registration to control the movement of personnel and goods.

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3. The British Government has further decided to take the following steps:

   a) To establish a system of checkpoints to control the movement of personnel and goods.
   b) To establish a system of registration to control the movement of personnel and goods.
far-reaching undertakings to Soviet Government in return for nothing more than a promise that they will not actually fight against us, which they are not likely to do in any case.

(ii) Guarantee of post-war consultation would not of course imply readiness to accept Soviet views on future of Europe or Asia, and undertaking not to form anti-Soviet alliance must necessarily be conditional on Soviet Government undertaking nothing against our interests either directly, or indirectly through revolutionary agitation.

(iii) We already recognise that Soviet Government are in de facto control of Baltic States and occupied parts of Poland and Roumania, and I see no objection to your telling them that we shall continue to act on this assumption. I obviously could not, however, agree to any statement implying de jure recognition or gravely compromising post-war position; and I fear that this is what they may want (as is indeed implied in paragraph 6 of your telegram). As you will have seen from my telegram No. , we are prepared to accept in substance your suggestion for dealing with Baltic ships which involves de facto recognition of Soviet occupation of Baltic states; and before that we had offered to set off British claims to confiscated property there against Baltic gold. I do not think therefore that implication in third paragraph of your telegram that we have shown intransigence on these questions is well founded.

(iv)
(14)
(iv) If by arranging to supply Soviet Government with articles they require you mean material for war, such as non-ferrous metals, these might be supplied as part of a trade agreement.

(v) Guarantee against attack by Turkey could no doubt be given with consent of Turkish Government, and it is obvious that we or our Allies would not attack Baku so long as Soviet Government gave no ground for such action.

2. Ready as I am to give you all the support I can in your efforts, I confess that I find it difficult to think that Soviet Government are really more afraid of our post-war attitude than of a victorious Germany, as suggested in paragraph eleven of your telegram, or that they believe they will be strong enough to defeat a German attack if they postpone it, as suggested in paragraph 5; and I still feel that real reason for their present attitude is fear of immediate consequences of opposition to German-Japanese combination. We cannot hope at present to remove their fear of Germany; but with aid of U.S. Government we might go far to remove Soviet fear of Japan and it is therefore important that your U.S. colleague should impress upon Soviet Government determination of his Government to prevent Japan from indulging in any further adventures. I am accordingly instructing H.M. Ambassador in Washington to make further representations to U.S. Government in this sense.

Repeated to Washington and Angora.
In 1928, the government of a certain country

irresponsible manner, giving the impression of

and the mass media, supplying them

with unverified information. This has

led to the erosion of trust in the

government, particularly among the

younger generation. It is essential

for the government to take

measures to address this situation and

restore the public's confidence in its

leadership. In conclusion, it is

important to acknowledge the

importance of accurate reporting and

responsible journalism in

Ensuring a transparent and accountable

government. It is crucial for every

country to prioritize the health of

its democracy and ensure that its

leaders are held accountable for their

decisions. In this regard, I urge the

government to take immediate

action to address this critical

issue.
CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10 Downing Street, S.W. 1, on Wednesday, October, 16, 1940, at 5 P.M.

Present:

The Right Hon. WINSTON S. CHURCHILL, M.P., Prime Minister (in the Chair).
The Right Hon. VISCOUNT HALIFAX, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.
The Right Hon. LORD BEAVERBROOK, Minister of Aircraft Production.
The Right Hon. LORD BEEft.ER, M.P., Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.
The Right Hon. ERNEST BEVIN, M.P., Minister of Labour and Minister of National Service.

The following were also present:
The Right Hon. VISCOUNT SIMON, Lord Chancellor (Items 11 and 12).
The Right Hon. VISCOUNT CRANBROOK, M.P., Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs.
The Right Hon. LORD LLOYD, Secretary of State for the Colonies (Items 11 and 12).
The Right Hon. A. DUFF COOPER, M.P., Minister without Portfolio (Items 1 to 10).

Secretariat.

Sir EDWARD BRIDGES.
Mr. W. D. WILKINSON.
Mr. L. F. BURGIS.

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**WAR CABINET 272 (40).**

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1. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs said that the Secretary of State for War's arrival in Egypt had become widely known and that a communiqué regarding the visit was being issued that day.

2. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs said that a number of telegrams from our Ministers at Athens and Angora raised questions regarding the strength of our forces in the Middle East. He thought it would be desirable that in reply to their telegrams he should make some play with the measures proposed to strengthen our position in the Middle East. He referred in this connection to the Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Air on Air Reinforcements to the Middle East (W.P. (40) 419).

3. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs read to the War Cabinet a summary of the reply received from the Vichy Government (telegram No. 862 from Madrid).

In a preliminary discussion the Prime Minister said that M. Baudouin's reply was not impressive, though it did not close the door to the suggested conversations. He thought the Vichy Government should be told that we were not proposing to take aggressive action against them; that we intended to support de Gaulle and maintain our rights of blockade; and that, whilst we should allow trade within the Mediterranean, we should intercept escorted convoys from French West African ports. We should add that, in the event of the Vichy Government retaliating by bombing Gibraltar, then not only should we bomb Casablanca but we would bomb Vichy itself. He was of opinion, however, that it would not be necessary to go to such extremes.

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs expressed general agreement with this view, but drew a distinction between the effect on French opinion of blockade measures and action such as had been taken at Oran and Dakar, which had retarded the swing of French public opinion to our side. It would be better to proceed by oral discussions than by way of notes, and he would draft, for consideration by the War Cabinet, a directive to Sir Samuel Hoare for use in conversations with the French Ambassador in Madrid.

The War Cabinet:

Took note that the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs would be circulating, for their consideration, a draft directive to His Majesty's Ambassador, Madrid.

* D.O. (40) 34th Meeting.
4. The First Lord of the Admiralty reported that H.M.S. Liverpool had been torpedoed by air attack late on the evening of the 14th. Her back had been broken, and whilst being towed to Alexandria her bow had become detached. Further information was being awaited.

H.M.S. Erebus, together with 3 destroyers and 2 spotting aircraft, had fired 50 rounds of 15-inch shell into Dunkerque on the previous night, without reply from the enemy. A number of fires had been observed in the dock area.

Submarine L.27 had reported three hits on a 7,000-ton merchant ship off Cherbourg.

The increased casualties to small craft, owing to mines round the coast, was causing the Admiralty a certain amount of anxiety. The matter was under active consideration.

The Lord President of the Council said that it was important to keep going the East Coast coal traffic.

The War Cabinet took note of the above statements.

5. The Lord Privy Seal said that, as directed by the War Cabinet on the 9th October, he and the Minister of Aircraft Production had seen representatives of the Newspaper Proprietors' Association. They had explained that the Government took a serious view of the position. The impression left on his mind had been that these representatives recognised that the articles in the Sunday Pictorial and the Daily Mirror were mischievous, and that they would do what they could to remedy matters. Later, Mr. Esmond Harmsworth (one of the representatives of the Newspaper Proprietors' Association at the interview) had rung up and asked whether he (the Lord Privy Seal) would see representatives of the Sunday Pictorial and the Daily Mirror. On the advice of Lord Beaverbrook he had agreed to do so. Two representatives had come to the meeting, Mr. Bartholomew and Mr. C. H. King. Mr. Bartholomew had been the more reasonable of the two. Mr. King had at first tried to adopt the attitude that he did not see what harm these articles were doing. The Lord Privy Seal said that he had made it clear that many people thought these articles were a deliberate Fifth Column activity. The representatives of the two newspapers had suggested that an approach might have been made to them at an earlier date by the Government. At the end of the interview, however, they had both appeared somewhat chastened, and had undertaken to exercise care in the future.

The Minister of Aircraft Production said that he thought that these two newspapers would amend their behaviour, at any rate for the time being.

The Home Secretary said that he had ordered investigations to be made as to who exercised the controlling influence over these two newspapers, notwithstanding that there was some risk of its becoming known that these investigations were being made.

The War Cabinet took note of the above statements.
Armistice Day.

(Previous Reference: W.M. (39) 38th Conclusions, Minute 12.)

Air Raids.

Damage and effect on civilian morale.

(Previous Reference: W.M. (40) 271st Conclusions, Minute 3.)

6. The Home Secretary said that a year ago the War Cabinet had decided that there should be no general celebration of Armistice Day, but that the usual Poppy Day Collection should take place on the 11th November, and that no obstacle would be placed in the way of local observance of the day if desired by small communities. It had also been agreed that the Sunday following Armistice Day should be observed as a Day of Dedication.

The Home Secretary proposed that a similar course should be followed this year, and that a recommendation in this sense should be made to The King. He intended to consult the Archbishop of Canterbury as to whether any notice of the arrangements suggested should be published in the Press.

The War Cabinet:

Approved these proposals, and invited the Home Secretary to make the necessary arrangements.

7. The Minister of Home Security said that relatively serious damage had been suffered during the last two nights. Public morale was good, but he thought we should look ahead, as morale might begin to suffer if the public felt that our reply to night bombing was ineffective. It was of the utmost importance that every effort should be made to press ahead as quickly as possible with the means of countering night bombing.

During the last two or three nights two tube stations had been pierced. The effect had been to make the public realise that practically no kind of shelter was invulnerable.

Reference was made to the very serious structural damage to the Carlton Club, where the building had been wrecked but virtually no personal injury had been sustained by the large number of people in the club. In some other cases, large numbers of casualties had been sustained at individual shelters, e.g., the refuge under the Stoke Newington block of flats. While the effects of high explosive bombs were freakish, everything pointed to the advantages of dispersal.

The War Cabinet were also informed that the Germans had recently announced publicly that their air attack was to be directed against the big hotels and clubs.

The War Cabinet took note of this statement.

8. The Prime Minister said that, while it was no doubt desirable to have alternative quarters in the London area to which the nucleus of the Government could transfer in the event of some temporary emergency, he was more than ever satisfied that it was essential that the central nucleus of Government should not move. This, however, carried with it certain consequences. First, only the essential headquarters staff should remain in Central London. He agreed with a suggestion made by the Lord Privy Seal that the "Grey" Move should proceed as rapidly as possible. Secondly, steps should be taken to ensure that accommodation for those working in Central London was as safe as possible. This might involve serious structural work to improve existing accommodation. He thought that there should be a survey of the protected accommodation of Government Departments, which varied considerably in quality. Thirdly, steps must be taken to enable the staff to adapt themselves to the new conditions. This would mean the provision of canteens.
and sleeping arrangements so that the staff could remain in their offices for several days on end before going away for a day or two days' rest.

The War Cabinet:—

Expressed general agreement with these views and invited the Prime Minister to issue a directive on these lines to the Departments concerned.

9. Reference was made to two Parliamentary Questions, of which one had disclosed the identity of an air raid shelter, while the other had contained a statement that work-people were unwilling to work overtime on account of air raids.

It was generally agreed that it was undesirable that such Questions should appear on the Order Paper. The Clerk at the table had certain powers in this matter, and the Lord Privy Seal was invited to draw his attention to the point.

It was also suggested that the Minister of Labour and National Service might reply to the second of these two Questions in terms which would make plain to Members generally the undesirability of putting down Questions from which the enemy might derive encouragement.

10. The Lord President of the Council said that together with the Lord Chancellor, the Speaker of the House of Commons, the First Commissioner of Works and the Chief Whip, he had inspected Church House, Westminster. They were unanimously of the opinion that Church House would provide a suitable alternative meeting place for Parliament. The Office of Works were taking the necessary steps to adapt the building.

Church House had already suffered a direct hit from a bomb. This had served to demonstrate the structural strength of the main part of the building, and was not an objection to the course proposed.

The War Cabinet:—

Approved the use of Church House, Westminster, as an alternative meeting place for Parliament.

11. The War Cabinet had before them two Memoranda by the Secretary of State for India (W.P. (G.) (40) 252 and 260).

The Secretary of State for India said that the situation had now been changed by the refusal of both Congress and the Moslem League to be parties to the plan of appointing Indian political leaders to the Viceroy's Executive Council, and of setting up a War Advisory Council. The Viceroy now recommended that the plan should be held in suspense, and should not be implemented unless and until such degree of general support was forthcoming as would ensure that the expanded Executive Council and the proposed War Advisory Council were reasonably representative.

The Secretary of State endorsed this course. He added that while the failure of India's politicians to take responsibility was disappointing, the general result of our declared policy was not unsatisfactory. It had:

(a) Assured the Moslems that we were not seeking to settle the future constitution of India over their heads, in consultation only with Congress. This had already led to more active cooperation as well as to a greater readiness to comply with Defence Rules;
(b) On the other hand, the Hindus have realised that the Viceroy is not in Mr. Jinnah's pocket. Nevertheless, the Congress party would continue recalcitrant, and some of their leaders, including Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, might have to be imprisoned.

c) We had justified our sincere desire for constitutional progress in India in the eyes of reasonable Indian opinion and in the world outside, and could afford to "stand pat" on our declared policy.

In discussion it was suggested that, now that we had taken our decision about the Burma Road, we might enlist the help of Chiang Kai-shek in persuading Indian democratic leaders to co-operate in our war effort.

The War Cabinet:

Authorised the Secretary of State for India—
(1) To inform the Viceroy that the proposals in his telegram of the 8th October were approved.
(2) To submit a draft of the statement for publication, outlined in paragraph 7 of that telegram.

India.
Suggested Industrial Training of Indians in the United Kingdom.

12. The Minister of Labour and National Service thought that the War Cabinet ought to be aware that the Viceroy had not seen his way to accept a proposal, which had been communicated to him through the India Office, under which a certain number of Indians should be sent to this country for industrial training courses. The Viceroy's view was that it was sufficient to hold courses in India under British instructors.

There was much to be said for holding these courses both in this country and in India. If semi-skilled Indian workers were brought over here they would come under the wholesome influence of the British Labour Movement, besides being turned into skilled workmen.

The view was expressed that Indian labour was now a fertile breeding ground for Communist propaganda. It was deplorable that bona fide labour had little or no influence in Indian politics.

The War Cabinet:

Invited the Secretary of State for India to give further consideration, in consultation with the Viceroy, to the scheme for bringing Indian workmen to this country for industrial training courses.

India.
Proposed High Commissioner for India in South Africa.

13. The War Cabinet:

Approved the proposals in W.P. (G.) (40) 258 for the conversion of the post of Agent-General to the Government of India in South Africa to that of a High Commissioner.

Richmond Terrace, S.W. 1,
October 16, 1940.
273rd Conclusions.

TO BE KEPT UNDER LOCK AND KEY.

It is requested that special care may be taken to ensure the secrecy of this document.

WAR CABINET 273 (40).

CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the War Cabinet, held in the Cabinet War Room, S.W. 1, on Friday, October 18, 1940, at 11:30 A.M.

Present:

The Right Hon. WINSTON S. CHURCHILL, M.P., Prime Minister (in the Chair).


The Right Hon. VISCOUNT HALIFAX, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

The Right Hon. Sir KINGSLEY WOOD, M.P., Chancellor of the Exchequer.

The following were also present:

The Right Hon. VISCOUNT CRANBORNE, M.P., Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs.


The Right Hon. A. DUFF COOPER, M.P., Minister of Information.

The Hon. Sir ALEXANDER CADOGAN, Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

General Sir JOHN DILL, Chief of the Imperial General Staff.

The Right Hon. LORD LLOYD, Secretary of State for the Colonies (Items 5-10).

The Right Hon. Sir ARCHIBALD SINCLAIR, Bt., M.P., Secretary of State for Air.

The Right Hon. HUGH DALTON, M.P., Minister for Economic Warfare (Items 5-10).

Marshal of the Royal Air Force Sir CYRIL L. N. NEWALL, Chief of the Air Staff.

Vice-Admiral T. S. V. PHILLIPS, Vice-Chief of Naval Staff.

Secretariat.

Sir EDWARD BRIDGES.
Major-General Sir HASTINGS ISMAY.
Mr. W. D. WILKINSON.
## WAR CABINET 273 (40).

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Naval, Military and Air Operations.

Air Operations. (Previous Reference: W.M. (40) 271st Conclusions, Minute 1.)

1. The Chief of the Air Staff reported that, owing to weather conditions, all our night-bombing operations on the previous night had been cancelled. In reply to a question he said that our aircraft were being fitted as rapidly as possible with devices to facilitate blind landings, for example, in fog. Special investigation was being made into the reason why a number of our bombers had crashed on returning from Germany two nights earlier.

The casualties for the previous day's operations over this country had been:

Our own—
3 machines.

Enemy—
4 destroyed.
6 probable.
5 damaged.

About 800 enemy machines, almost all of them fighters, had taken part in the previous day's operations over this country. During the previous night a total of about 250 enemy aircraft had been engaged, of which 200 had operated over London, which had again been the principal objective. There had been a minor scale of attack on Birmingham and Liverpool.

Naval Operations. (Previous Reference: W.M. (40) 272nd Conclusions, Minute 4.)

The Vice Chief of Naval Staff reported that Newcastle, Emerald and five destroyers had sailed the previous morning to intercept four enemy destroyers which had been sighted west of Ushant, steering in a westerly direction. At 4.12 p.m. the destroyers had been engaged at extreme range, but had made their retirement to Brest. Three motor torpedo boats had carried out an offensive sweep between Flushing and Ijmuiden during the previous night. No result had yet been reported.

Four French submarines and a tanker, escorted by a sloop and aircraft, had passed Gibraltar in a westerly direction the previous day. They had been shadowed by a British aircraft to ensure that their destination was Casablanca.

A report stated that the French cruiser Primauget, an oiler and two submarines had sailed south from Dakar on the 16th October. Another report was to the effect that the Strasbourg and "20 units" were about to leave Toulon.

The Vice Chief of Naval Staff informed the War Cabinet of the dispositions of His Majesty's ships to meet these contingencies. It was agreed that there could be no question of Vichy Government warships being permitted to interfere with the sea communications of the Free French Forces in Equatorial Africa. Any Vichy vessels which attempted to do so would be stopped, and instructed to return to Dakar or Casablanca.

The Vice Chief of Naval Staff reported the mining of two British vessels in convoy off Alderburgh. One of them had been taken in tow, and was expected to reach harbour. Another convoy had been attacked by E-boats off Great Yarmouth. One E-boat had been sunk. Another convoy had been attacked by a U-boat off Malin Head. In this attack one British vessel of 3,800 tons, carrying pit props, had been sunk, and a French tanker of 9,500 tons had been holed.

North-west of Bloody Foreland H.M.S. Folkestone had attacked a U-boat, astern of a convoy, with gunfire.

Military Operations.

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff said that there was no change in the situation in the Middle East.

The War Cabinet took note of the above statements.
Government Departments.

Protected accommodation.

(Previous Reference: W.M. (40) 272nd Conclusions, Minute 8.)

2. Reference was made to the serious damage which had been done to the Treasury building by an H.E. bomb during the previous night when four members of the staff had been killed.

Reference was made to the steps in progress to strengthen some of the existing protected accommodation. None of the public offices were proof against direct hits and it was important to disperse staff as far as practicable.

The Lord Privy Seal said that he was enquiring into the existing position of the Grey Move, and the possibility of speeding it up.

The War Cabinet took note of this statement.

Parliament.

Alternative meeting place.

(Previous Reference: W.M. (40) 272nd Conclusions, Minute 10.)

3. In connexion with the preceding minute the Lord President of the Council said that he was hoping shortly to receive a report on the structural strength of Church House. Prima facie, the building was of considerable strength. It contained large rooms suitable for meeting-places for both the Lords and the Commons.

After a short discussion the War Cabinet decided as follows—

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasury should get into touch with the Whips of other parties and the appropriate authorities with a view to arrangements being made on the following lines:

(a) That Parliament should adjourn after its next meeting pending the completion of the preparations at Church House. The adjournment might be for 14 days.

(b) Thereafter Parliament should hold very short meetings at irregular intervals, e.g., it was undesirable that Parliament should always be called together on a Tuesday.

These arrangements would, of course, apply to both Houses of Parliament.

Air Raid Warnings.

The cause of loss of working time in Munitions Factories.

(Previous Reference: W.M. (40) 270th Conclusions, Minute 4.)

4. The Minister of Labour and National Service said that he had begun his examination of the position at munitions factories, with a view to eliminating conditions leading to a loss of working time, and he hoped to achieve good results by such methods as meeting the men in the workshops and taking their difficulties into consideration. He was being assisted in this task by a special branch of his Department working in co-operation with representatives of the Air Ministry and Ministry of Home Security. In seaport towns representatives of the Admiralty would also be brought into consultation.

Outside London there had been a considerable improvement, but some difficulty was still being experienced at Bristol.

The Lord Privy Seal suggested that it might be practicable to establish "control rooms" in the larger factories. The men would feel more confidence if they knew that their managements were able to follow the movements of enemy aircraft in their neighbourhood.

The War Cabinet took note with approval of the above statements.
5. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs said that, according to a recent telegram from Moscow (No. 878), the possibilities of a trade or barter agreement looked promising. Sir Stafford Cripps had been instructed to proceed with negotiations on the basis suggested in his telegram.

The Foreign Secretary also referred to certain action taken in this country to requisition ships belonging to the Baltic States. M. Maisky had said that, if we requisitioned these ships, it would have the most serious effect on our relationship with the U.S.S.R. He (the Foreign Secretary) had therefore taken the responsibility of informing Sir Stafford Cripps that, if he was satisfied that the requisitioning of these ships would spoil the chances of successful negotiations with the U.S.S.R., we would countermand this action.

The War Cabinet took note of this statement.

6. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs said that several telegrams had been received from Sir Robert Craigie in the last few days, as a result of a report which had reached Japan that we intended to remove the restrictions on exports of prohibited articles from Hong Kong to China. This report, which was due to a misunderstanding, had made Sir Robert anxious as to Japan's reactions. Sir Robert had been informed that there was no present intention of removing the restrictions now in force, though we reserved the right to modify that part of the Burma Road Agreement which related to trade passing through Hong Kong.

The War Cabinet took note of this statement.

7. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs said that he had seen the Netherlands Minister on the previous day, at the request of the Chiefs of Staff, to ask whether the Dutch would co-operate in the Singapore Defence Conference and in other Staff Conversations.

The Dutch Minister had said that the United States defence authorities had asked to be supplied with a good deal of technical and strategic information about the Netherlands East Indies. He had no doubt that this request would be agreed to. The Dutch were rather reluctant to go so far as to send representatives to Singapore, but arrangements would be made for the exchange of information in London.

The War Cabinet took note of this statement.

8. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs said that the replacement of Señor Beigbeder by Señor Suñer as Foreign Minister was bad from our point of view. Our Ambassador had warned us that this was a possibility, but he had not expected the change to take place so soon.

The War Cabinet were informed that there was a good deal of information which seemed to show that this change might not mean quite so much as appeared at first sight. The change was, no doubt, a defeat for the anti-German party. But anti-German feeling in Spain was very strong. While, therefore, it was wise
to treat this change as a definite set-back and to make plans accordingly, we should still not assume that Spain was bound to come into the war against us, and we should make every effort to keep Spain out of the war.

The Foreign Secretary said that he intended to consult Sir Samuel Hoare as to whether, in the circumstances, it would be wise to make the proposed statement on Anglo-Spanish relations in Parliament on the following Tuesday.

The War Cabinet took note of this statement.

9. The War Cabinet had before them a draft telegram to Sir Samuel Hoare (W.P. (40) 420) as to relations with the Vichy Government. A number of amendments were made, and are set out in the Conclusions to this Minute.

Discussion turned mainly on an amendment proposed to be made at the end of paragraph 7, to the effect that if we took reprisals against targets in unoccupied France we should direct our attention particularly to the seat of the Vichy Government wherever it might be.

The Prime Minister favoured an amendment in this sense, as the most likely means of deterring the Vichy Government from bombing Gibraltar. He did not think they were likely to do this; but if we were to retaliate, we should retaliate effectively; and if the Vichy Government were driven out of Vichy, it would be a long step towards their final liquidation.

The Foreign Secretary thought that there were strong arguments against bombing Vichy. In the first place, information was accumulating to show that feeling in unoccupied France was going in our favour. Nevertheless, we were being continually warned by our friends that the French people had a great veneration for Marshal Pétain and that it would be inadvisable to take action against him personally.

In the second place, he thought that the bombing of an open town like Vichy was likely to produce the opposite effect to that desired. He thought that it would be better to indicate that we should bomb targets in unoccupied France, and to leave the Vichy Government guessing. His own view would be that we should attack military targets, such as the oil tanks in unoccupied France, which we had hitherto refrained from bombing.

In further discussion it was pointed out that the matter for immediate decision was not whether authority should be given now to bomb Vichy. That question would not arise unless and until the French bombed Gibraltar again. The immediate question was how we could put into Sir Samuel Hoare’s hands a threat which could most effectively deter the French Government from bombing Gibraltar again. For this purpose it would be adequate to add to paragraph 7 the words “Even the seat of Government itself would not necessarily be immune.”

The War Cabinet—

(1) Approved the despatch to Sir Samuel Hoare of the draft telegram proposed by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (W.P. (40) 420), subject to the following amendments:

Paragraph 2 should read as follows: “You should speak to the French Ambassador on the following lines.”
Paragraph 4, line 2. After “and” insert “still.”

Paragraph 4. After the first sentence insert the following: “They inflexibly reject all enemy suggestions of which they have had notice to make a peace in which Germany and Italy would be paid off out of the territories of France.”

Paragraph 4, line 4. After “our” insert “own.”

Paragraph 6, line 6. For “satisfy” read “convince.”

Paragraph 8. At end add: “We feel pretty sure that this victory will be achieved.”

Paragraph 7, line 4. After “territory” add “harbours.”

Paragraph 7. At end add “and you may add in the course of conversation that even the seat of Government itself would not necessarily be immune.”

(2) Agreed that the Foreign Secretary should inform Sir Samuel Hoare that the draft telegram had been prepared on the basis of the summary of the French Government’s reply, the full text not having been received. Unless, however, the instructions sent to him required modification by reason of some point in the full text of the French communication not covered by the summary, he should act on these instructions forthwith.

10. The War Cabinet had before them Memoranda by the Minister of Economic Warfare and the First Lord of the Admiralty (W.P. (40) 410 and W.P. (40) 418 respectively).

A short preliminary discussion took place on the Memorandum by the First Lord of the Admiralty. It was felt, however, that this Paper raised such wide issues in regard to naval strength that it would be better to have a discussion on this matter at a later Meeting when more time was available.

On the blockade issues, the Minister of Economic Warfare said that, while he was quite ready to agree to make concessions in regard to trade between North Africa and ports in unoccupied France, he could not agree to a position whereby French West African trade proceeded virtually without interference.

As regards the trade from North Africa (including the Atlantic ports of French Morocco as suggested in paragraph 8 of the telegram to Sir Samuel Hoare, see Minute 9), he thought that it would be perfectly right that we should allow certain foodstuffs to pass. We should, however, prevent alloys being shipped from Casablanca to the Mediterranean ports of France. To enable a course of this kind to be carried out, we should have to have a Consul at Casablanca.

The Minister also drew attention to the almost symbolic nature of some of the escorts now used to convoy French ships through the Straits of Gibraltar. He was not asking that every blockade-runner should be intercepted, but only that sufficient ships should be seized to act as a deterrent.

The First Lord of the Admiralty said that it was his duty to put the full facts of the naval position before the War Cabinet. A few weeks ago he had hoped that we should be greatly stronger as regards the type of vessel which was of importance for blockade and convoy duties. Owing, however, to mishaps to a number of cruisers, and to delays in the dockyards, we were not at present in a position to assemble a strong fleet at the Straits of Gibraltar. It was, of course, within the Admiralty’s power to stop the weak escorts with the convoys now passing through the Straits. If, however, the French retaliated against such action, we should
have to act at once with the forces immediately at our disposal. In the Admiralty view, having regard to the naval position, if it was possible for us to reach a tolerable agreement with the Vichy Government, we should seize no opportunity of doing so.

Discussion followed as to whether we should take action to stop escorted French vessels proceeding through the Straits, pending further discussions at Madrid as the result of the telegram to Sir Samuel Hoare, dealt with in the preceding Minute. The Foreign Secretary said that he thought the chances of reaching a satisfactory agreement with the Vichy Government were not great. In any case we were now unlikely to reach an agreement quickly. We had warned the Vichy Government that we reserved our rights of blockade, and he was in favour of taking action in regard to escorted vessels without waiting for further results from the negotiations, provided that we acted with great discretion.

The War Cabinet agreed—

That the Admiralty should no longer be debarred from applying Contraband Control Measures to escorted French convoys passing through the Straits of Gibraltar. That the authority to interfere with escorted French convoys must be used with discretion. Thus, when an escorted convoy was stopped, it should be by an overwhelming show of force, so as to avoid the risk of having actually to use force; and it was not necessary for the present to attempt to stop every convoy.

Richmond Terrace, S.W. 1,
October 18, 1940.
CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10 Downing Street, S.W. 1, on Monday, October 21, 1940, at 5 P.M.

Present:

The Right Hon. A. Greenwood, M.P., Minister without Portfolio.
The Right Hon. Ernest Bevin, M.P., Minister of Labour and Minister of National Service.

The following were also present:

The Right Hon. Sir Andrew Duncan, M.P., Minister of Supply (Item 5).
The Right Hon. A. Duff Cooper, M.P., Minister of Information.
Sir Cyril Hurcomb, Director-General, Ministry of Shipping (Item 6).

Vice-Admiral T. S. V. Phillips, Vice-Chief of Naval Staff (Items 1-4).

Secretariat.

Sir Edward Bridges.
Mr. W. D. Wilkinson.
Mr. L. F. Burges.
## WAR CABINET 274 (40).

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Naval, Military

and Air
Operations.

(Previous
Reference:
W.M. (40) 272nd
Conclusions,
Minute 1.)

Air Operations. During the previous night A.A. guns had brought down two enemy bombers for certain, and possibly a third.

All the machines detailed to attack targets in Northern Italy had not reached their objectives, but three targets had been bombed and good results had been reported. We had lost one Whitley and crew; three Whitleys had fallen into the sea, but the crews had been saved.

The Hampdens detailed to attack Berlin had had satisfactory results. One pilot had come down to 2,000 feet and dropped four 500-lb. bombs on the Chancellery. One Hampden had been lost. All the Wellingtons had returned and had reported satisfactory results.

Four Italian aircraft from the Dodecanese had bombed the oil refinery at Bahrain in the early hours of the 19th October. This raid was worthy of note as the distance flown had been approximately 2,600 miles.

Twenty-four enemy aircraft had flown over London between 12 o'clock and 5:45 p.m. that afternoon. Owing to the clouds many of these aircraft had been flying at low altitudes, and one had come down as low as 3,000 to 4,000 feet.

Naval Operations. The Vice-Chief of Naval Staff reported that a number of M.T.B.'s had made a sweep off Ostend the previous night, and had encountered some German trawlers. One M.T.B. had been sunk.

A Red Sea convoy, escorted by a cruiser and two destroyers, had been attacked the previous night by Italian destroyers off Massawa. No damage had been reported, but one Italian destroyer had run ashore and had finally blown up.

Two Italian submarines had been sunk east of Gibraltar during the week-end.

A further eight United States destroyers were now on their way across the Atlantic. So far only three United States destroyers were in service.

Shipping Losses. The shipping losses over the previous week-end had been the worst ever experienced. At least 14 ships had been torpedoed in one convoy and 11 in another, although it was possible that some of these ships were still afloat. The Germans had employed new tactics, attacking the convoy at night, in conditions in which visibility was less than 1 mile. It seemed certain that R.D.F. was now being used by the enemy to locate convoys.

The Admiralty were taking all steps possible to deal with the new situation.

Military

Operations: Egypt.

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff reported that on the 15th October three small parties of enemy M.T. had moved 20 miles along the road from Sidi Barrani towards Matruh. Later the same day 30-40 enemy M.T. had been located in camp near the same spot, and the Support Group of the 7th Armoured Division had attempted to attack them. The enemy, however, had withdrawn towards Sidi Barrani.
The Italian Desert Force under General Maletti was still in the desert some 40 miles south-west of Sidi Barrani, and was being carefully watched by our reconnaissances.

The number of Italian Divisions in this theatre was now estimated to be:

- 3 in the Sidi Barrani area,
- 1 at Sollum,
- Possibly 1 on the lines of communication between these two places, making a total of 6, together with a tank group and the Maletti column.

A 6th Division was at Bardia, 20 miles north-west of Sollum.

A telegram had been received from the Commander-in-Chief, Middle East, giving the comparative figure of Italian losses and our own in Libya since the beginning of the war. The first Italian casualty list had been missed, but the remainder showed 800 killed, 1,701 wounded, 861 missing to the end of September. Our own casualties over the same period had been 66 killed, 68 wounded, 36 missing.

The Sandford Force had penetrated south of Lake Tana. Military successes in Africa were, however, needed to give the revolt some encouragement.

The War Cabinet took note of the above statements.

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**Air Raids.**
Damage and effect on civilian morale.
(Previous Reference: W.M. (40) 272nd Conclusions, Minute 7.)

The Home Secretary said that on the previous night about 70 people had been killed and 300 seriously injured in London. A fair amount of damage had also been done to railway communications.

Reference was made to the effect of air raids on public morale. There was comment that the A.A. barrage had decreased, and some disappointment that more enemy bombers were not brought down at night. Press statements to the effect that an antidote to the night bombers might be expected shortly had not been realised, with the result that Londoners were at the moment a little pessimistic.

The Lord Privy Seal stated that the Prime Minister had held a Meeting that morning at which the question of the best means of combating night bombers had been fully dealt with.

The Home Secretary said that the public had been excluded from this shelter while work was in progress on the structural improvements. When an air raid warning had sounded the shelter had not been opened quickly. Some disorder had followed, and a party had attempted to rush the A.R.P. Control Office in Stepney. The Police had drawn their truncheons, and a number of men had been arrested. The Daily Worker had made strong complaint about the Police action, but as far as he (the Home Secretary) could see, the Police had been fully justified.

The War Cabinet took note of these statements.
3. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs gave the War Cabinet the following information:

Recent telegrams from Sir Stafford Cripps showed that the prospects of a trade or barter agreement with the U.S.S.R. were promising, and that the discussions between the Turkish Ambassador and M. Molotov had been satisfactory. (Telegrams Nos. 875 and 888 from Moscow.)

According to the latest telegram from Sir Hugh Knatchbull-Hugessen (No. 40 from Istanbul), Turkey was adopting a satisfactorily firm attitude in face of German pressure.

Three telegrams from Sir A. Clark Kerr (Nos. 141–143 from Chunking) reported two long talks with Marshal Chiang Kai-shek as to China’s desire for closer co-operation. These telegrams deserved close consideration, but it was doubtful whether we could do much in regard to them until after the Presidential Election.

The Foreign Secretary said that he had only had a few minutes’ discussion with Lord Lothian since the latter’s arrival in this country. Lord Lothian had reported the almost miraculous change of opinion in the United States after it had become clear that this country was effectively resisting the German air attack.

Sir Samuel Hoare had seen General Franco who had been at pains to explain that the ministerial changes meant no change in policy. (Telegram 886 from Madrid.) He was circulating to the War Cabinet a despatch from Sir Samuel Hoare which gave a good deal of the background to the appointment of a new Foreign Minister. The general impression was that Senor Suñer would not be able to drag Spain into the war, because that would bring famine to Spain.

The War Cabinet took note of this statement.

4. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs said that the Belgian Ambassador had been to see him that morning to complain about an article in the Sunday Dispatch of the previous day, entitled “The Real Guilty Men.” The particular passage complained of ran as follows:

“It is plain that King Leopold has to be tried by his own people and the world for what many of us think was his deliberate treason to them and us, and either acquitted as a foolish weakling, unfit to govern a brave people, or else condemned and executed. . . . If he is guilty, he should die. What is one life to the sweetening of the world by such an execution. . . .”

Such an article played straight into German hands, and provided perfect material for their propaganda.

In discussion, the view was expressed that, objectionable as the article was, it was impossible to stop attacks being made on the King of the Belgians, or to muzzle a well-known writer like H. G. Wells. Further, it was probably well recognised that H. G. Wells in no way represented public opinion in this country.

The general view of the War Cabinet was that the Foreign Secretary should make representations on this subject to Mr. E. Harmsworth.

The War Cabinet invited the Foreign Secretary to take this course.
5. The War Cabinet had before them a Memorandum by the Minister without Portfolio (W.P. (G.) (40) 267) setting out his proposals for adjusting the demands made by the Minister of Labour for machine tools for Government Training Establishments.

The Minister without Portfolio explained that his recommendations were as follows:

- **Second-hand Machine Tools.**—Every effort should be made to meet the demand for 2,250 second-hand tools. The demand should not, however, be given an absolute priority; discretion should be left to the Machine Tool Controller to deal with special cases where there might be interference with urgently needed immediate production. A monthly report should be submitted to him (the Minister without Portfolio) showing the extent to which the demands for second-hand machine tools were being met, and, so far as they were being refused, the nature of the production work which had been given preference.

- **New Machine Tools.**—If it was not possible to modify the Minister of Labour's scheme so that training needing new tools could be carried out in factories, each of the Production Departments would have to make a small contribution of new tools to the Minister's training scheme for a limited period, at the end of which the situation could again be reviewed.

The Minister without Portfolio said that his scheme had the general support of the Minister of Supply and the First Lord of the Admiralty, at any rate so far as concerned second-hand tools. The Minister of Aircraft Production did not agree that either new or second-hand tools should be allocated to the Training Centres, and wished every available machine tool brought into immediate production.

The Minister of Labour and National Service said that he wished to press for his original requirement of 2,250 second-hand tools and 750 new tools within the next 30 weeks. The Minister made the following points:

1. A high proportion of persons trained in his centres were being sent to factories for which the Minister of Aircraft Production was responsible.

2. A very high proportion of persons trained in his centres were being retained in the factories to which they were sent.

3. To a large extent the phrase "semi-skilled workers" was a misnomer. The trainees from his centres were normally ready to begin immediate production.

4. He could put machine tools to better uses than those to which they were sometimes put. He gave instances of machine tools being installed in unfinished factories.

The Lord Privy Seal suggested that a general approval should be given to the recommendations made in W.P. (G) (40) 267, which appeared to hold the balance fairly between the interests of the Departments concerned. It seemed right that the Minister of Labour should have the use of a proportion of new tools, in order that the latter part of the training in his centres could be given on tools similar to those in use in actual production.

The War Cabinet—

(a) Gave general approval to the recommendations in W.P. (G) (40) 267:
Shipping.
Sale of Vessels ordered by the Government to shipowners who have lost vessels during the war.

Previous Reference: W.M. (40) 266th Conclusions, Minute 6.

(b) Accepted, as regards second-hand machine tools, the recommendations at "A" above.

c) Authorised the Minister without Portfolio to take the final decisions as to the allocation of a proportion of new tools to the Ministry of Labour Centres, from the quotas available to the Production Departments. This contribution from the Production Departments would be for a limited period of time, at the end of which the situation would again be reviewed.

Richmond Terrace, S.W. 1,
October 21, 1940.
CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the War Cabinet, held in the Prime Minister's Room, House of Commons, on Tuesday, October 22, 1940, at 12 Noon.

Present:

The Right Hon. WINSTON S. CHURCHILL, M.P., Prime Minister (in the Chair).
The Right Hon. VISCOUNT HALIFAX, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.
The Right Hon. LORD BEAVERBROOK, Minister of Aircraft Production.
The Right Hon. HERBERT MORRISON, M.P., Secretary of State for the Home Department and Minister of Home Security.
The Right Hon. A. V. ALEXANDER, M.P., First Lord of the Admiralty (Items 1-5).
The Right Hon. VISCOUNT CRANBORNE, M.P., Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs (Items 1-5).
The Right Hon. Sir ARCHIBALD SINCLAIR, Bt., M.P., Secretary of State for Air.

The following were also present:

Lieut.-Colonel the Right Hon. J. T. C. MOORE-BRABAZON, M.P., Minister of Transport (Item 6).

Secretariat:

Sir EDWARD BRIDGES.
Mr. L. F. BURGIS.
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1. The Lord Privy Seal suggested that it would be desirable to make some statement during the second reading of the Prolongation of Parliament Bill indicating the Government's intention to arrange for a new register of electors before a general election was held after the war.

The War Cabinet agreed that the Home Secretary should make the following statement:

An appeal to the electorate must always remain the final constitutional method of resolving grave issues of national policy. No one can foresee what circumstances will arise, but in normal conditions it will be the desire of His Majesty's Government, when a general election again becomes practicable, to give sufficient notice for the creation of a new register, and this interval would also afford an opportunity for the House to consider, if it so desired, questions connected with changes of our electoral system.

2. The Prime Minister said that he had examined the need for safer accommodation for essential Government staffs who would have to continue to work in London. A number of these staffs were now working in old buildings which were quite insecure, and should be moved to buildings which would provide greater safety and which would afford them reasonable means of carrying on their work. For many reasons “Paddock” was an unsuitable solution to the problem. The Foreign Office Building and the “New Public Offices” were strongly built, but were not constructed to withstand direct hits. He had given authority for part of the latter building to be strengthened so as to give a considerable measure of security, but the work would not be completed for six weeks. As part of the problem of providing adequate accommodation for central staffs, the Board of Trade had been invited to move to new premises. The Department was prepared to fall in with this arrangement, but this move must be considered in relation to the general scheme.

Continuing, the Prime Minister said that there were a number of stronger modern buildings in London of steel-framed construction, some of them still uncompleted, within a comparatively short distance of Whitehall, and he thought that Ministers and essential staffs should be distributed among these buildings when the necessary works had been completed. The Minister of Aircraft Production had concerned himself in the matter, and might be authorised to direct and supervise, on behalf of the War Cabinet, the important and extensive works required.

The Minister of Aircraft Production informed the War Cabinet of the buildings which he had in mind. These buildings were as yet uncompleted, so that the question of turning out other people to make room for the Government staffs did not arise. The building which he had in mind for the accommodation of the Prime Minister, War Cabinet Ministers and certain staffs connected with the higher direction of the war would, he hoped, be ready for occupation within three to four weeks.

Reference was made to the Prime Minister’s accommodation. The War Cabinet were unanimously of the opinion that it was wrong for the Prime Minister to continue to live or to transact business at No. 10, Downing Street. They urged him most strongly to agree to other arrangements being made forthwith for his accommodation in a securer building.

The War Cabinet invited the Minister of Aircraft Production to direct and supervise on their behalf the programme of works necessary to provide adequate protected accommodation in London for the central nucleus of the Government.
The Minister of Aircraft Production would keep in close touch with the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and with the Minister of Works and Buildings and First Commissioner of Works, and would have authority to settle any questions of allocation of accommodation involved.

3. In connexion with the preceding Minute, further discussion took place on the question of an alternative meeting-place for Parliament. Doubts were expressed whether Church House was a suitable meeting-place.

The War Cabinet:

Invited the Minister of Aircraft Production, as part of the work of supervising the provision of accommodation in London for the central nucleus of Government, to take account of the arrangements for alternative accommodation for Meetings of Parliament, in consultation with the Lord President of the Council.

The Prime Minister also said that, when Parliament adjourned on Thursday, it was his intention to propose an adjournment for fourteen days.

General agreement was expressed with the view that it was most undesirable that Parliament should make a habit of meeting for two or three days consecutively.

4. The Minister of Labour and National Service said that it had been suggested to him that we were not making enough use of propaganda on the long wave-lengths, and that in particular the question of our propaganda in the Middle East ought perhaps to be enquired into.

The War Cabinet:

Invited the Minister of Labour and National Service to raise these questions at a Meeting when the Minister of Information and the Minister of Economic Warfare were present.

5. The Prime Minister said that the shipping losses of the last two or three days had been without precedent. Some 100,000 tons of shipping had been sunk, in spite of the fact that one of the convoys attacked had been strongly protected. On the previous evening he had reviewed the matter with those concerned, and the adoption of certain measures, which the Prime Minister described, had been decided upon. The Prime Minister added that, if the new measures to be adopted were not successful, it would be necessary to raise again the question of the use of certain bases in the Irish Free State.

The War Cabinet took note of the above statements.
6. The War Cabinet had before them a Joint Memorandum by the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Minister of Transport (W.P. (G.) (40) 270).

The Memorandum dealt with two main points:—

First, it was recommended that effect should be given at once to the recommendations in the Report of the Charges (Railway Control) Consultative Committee; namely, that no increase should be made in season tickets, workmen’s tickets, or ordinary fares on the L.P.T.B. system, but that other charges and fares should be increased from 10 per cent. to 16½ per cent. above the pre-war basis.

Secondly, it was pointed out that the new War Compensation Scheme cut across the Agreement with the Railway Companies, which provided that the cost of restoring war damage up to a maximum of £40 millions a year should be met as a revenue charge. It was therefore suggested that the principles of the Railway Agreement should be preserved, but that negotiations should at once be opened with the Railway Companies with a view to such modifications of that Agreement as might be necessary in the light of the Government’s War Compensation Scheme.

**Increased charges.**

1. The Minister of Transport said that, whatever might be the position after the war as to the management and ownership of the railways, it was important to have a healthy railway system not dependent on subsidies, and with an incentive to efficiency.

2. Increases in freights would not increase food costs more than 1d. per person per week.

3. The Minister without Portfolio said that, if there was any question of further increases in railway charges in future to meet still higher costs, he would strongly oppose any further increase in freights, which would cost far more to the State, in the long run, than an outright subsidy. The same objection, however, did not apply to an increase in fares.

**Negotiation of a New Railway Agreement.**

4. The Minister of Transport said that until some weeks ago it had looked as though the Railway Companies would earn a net pool profit of £44 millions. Since then, traffic had fallen off, and a net pool profit in 1940 of a little over £40 millions now appeared likely.

5. General agreement was expressed with the view that a new Railway Agreement should be negotiated, and that the terms of the original Agreement had perhaps been rather generous.

6. Looked at from this point of view, it was perhaps going too far to state that “the principles of the existing Railway Agreement should be preserved.” The Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Minister of Transport undertook to explore the basis of the new Agreement and to submit proposals to the War Cabinet.

7. The suggestion was made that the Executive Committee might become a Board responsible to the Minister of Transport only for the period of the war.

The War Cabinet:—

(i) Agreed that effect should be given forthwith to the recommendations in the Report of the Charges (Railway Control) Consultative Committee.
(ii) Agreed that negotiations should be opened with the Railway Companies with a view to the negotiation of a new Agreement, which should take into account the Government's War Compensation Scheme.

(iii) Invited the Minister of Transport to make an announcement in regard to (i) and (ii) in Parliament.

(iv) Invited the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Minister of Transport to consult together and submit to the War Cabinet the outlines of the new Agreement proposed.

*Richmond Terrace, S W 1,*

*October 22, 1940.*
CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the War Cabinet, held in the Prime Minister's Room, House of Commons, on Thursday, October 24, 1940, at 12 NOON.

Present:

The Right Hon. WINSTON S. CHURCHILL, M.P., Prime Minister (in the Chair).
The Right Hon. VISCOUNT HALIFAX, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.
The Right Hon. LORD BEAVERBROOK, Minister of Aircraft Production.

The following were also present:

The Right Hon. HERBERT MORRISON, M.P., Secretary of State for the Home Department and Minister of Home Security.
The Right Hon. LORD LLOYD, Secretary of State for the Colonies (Item 11).
Mr. W. R. GRENFELL, M.P., Secretary for Mines (Item 10).
Marshal of the Royal Air Force Sir CYRIL L. N. NEWALL, Chief of the Air Staff.

General Sir JOHN DILL, Chief of the Imperial General Staff.

Secretariat.

Sir EDWARD BRIDGES.
Major-General Sir HASTINGS ISMAY.
Mr. W. D. WILKINSON.
Mr. L. F. BURGIS.

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1. The Prime Minister paid a tribute to the spirit of the Polish forces which he had visited on the previous day. At present these forces numbered under 20,000, but later their numbers might be increased by volunteers from the United States. They were short of artillery, and were asking for 4.5 howitzers. No doubt this request would be considered by the War Office.

The War Cabinet:

(1) Took note of this statement.
(2) Invited the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, in the absence of the Secretary of State for War, to consider whether 4.5 howitzers could be supplied to the Polish forces.

2. Arising out of the preceding Minute, the Prime Minister suggested that a meeting of a revived Supreme War Council might be held in London at an early date. The Council might comprise representatives of Free France, Holland, Belgium, Norway, Poland and Czechoslovakia; the Dominion High Commissioners might also be invited to attend. The meeting would thus be representative of a very large area. The Council might hear statements from the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and might be invited to pass resolutions placing on record the conviction of the Allies that no general settlement of Europe would be possible so long as large territories were constrained by violence to remain members of the German-Italian bloc. It might be arranged that meetings of the Council should be held, say, once a quarter.

The War Cabinet:

Invited the Foreign Secretary to submit detailed proposals for a revival of the Supreme War Council on the lines suggested.

3. The War Cabinet were informed that General Sikorski had suggested that we might attach part of the French gold now in Canada against the Polish gold in Bamako, which would be formally put at our disposal by the Polish Government.

No progress had been made as regards the French gold in the custody of the Bank of Canada, although the Prime Minister had sent a personal telegram to Mr. Mackenzie King. It would be necessary to apply further pressure.

The War Cabinet:

Took note of this statement, and invited the Chancellor of the Exchequer to take up General Sikorski's suggestion.

4. The Secretary of State for the Home Department and Minister of Home Security reported that the assurance which he had given during the Second Reading debate on the Prolongation of Parliament Bill had been well received. This assurance had referred to "an opportunity to consider questions connected with changes in our electoral system," before a General Election was held, but had made no mention of redistribution. He had now authorised the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State to indicate in debate that redistribution would not be excluded from consideration at that time.

The War Cabinet approved the Home Secretary's action.
Iraq.
Proposals for visit of Secretary of State for War.
(Previous Reference: W.M. (40) 272nd Conclusions, Minute 1.)

5. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs drew attention to Bagdad telegram No. 632, conveying a suggestion from the Government of Iraq that the Secretary of State for War might visit that country during his Middle Eastern tour.

In discussion it was pointed out that the security aspect of such a visit would need careful consideration, and that the extension of this visit would be inconvenient.

The War Cabinet:
Invited the Foreign Secretary to decline the Iraqi Government's invitation on the grounds that the Secretary of State for War could only be absent from this country for a limited time, and would have to make his report in London at an early date.

France.
Relations with the Vichy Government.
(Previous Reference: W.M. (40) 273rd Conclusions, Minute 9.)

6. The attention of the War Cabinet was drawn to Madrid telegram No. 900, reporting a conversation between Sir Samuel Hoare and the French Ambassador at Madrid. The French Ambassador had spoken of the deep cleavages of opinion in the Vichy Government and of the growing resentment of the French people against M. Laval's attempts to make peace with Germany.

He had suggested that it might be prudent for us to make an approach to General Weygand, preferably using a non-de Gaulle Frenchman as an intermediary.

The Prime Minister said that the French were now beginning to realise that they could not make final terms with Germany without surrendering Alsace-Lorraine and possibly also Nice and Savoy. Even after that surrender they would be no more than satellites of Germany and Italy.

The Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs reported a conversation which he had the previous day with M. Rougier, which indicated that M. Laval had no following in France, and did not possess the confidence of Marshal Pétain, who, however, had found him useful. M. Rougier had suggested that we should employ a double line of approach to the Vichy Government—

(i) we should reassure them as to the French Empire, and indicate readiness to respect the status quo;
(ii) we should be ready to agree to some relaxation of the blockade, and should let it be known that France owed it to us that additional foodstuffs were becoming available to her from abroad.

M. Rougier thought that General Weygand had gone to North Africa to pull the place together, and that he would take the line that he was trying to hold North Africa for France against all comers—German, Italian, British, Spanish and de Gaullist. Now that General Weygand had got away from the politicians, his attitude against the Germans would probably stiffen, and he might be useful to us some day.

The Prime Minister thought that it would be premature to make any relaxation in our blockade of French territories. He noticed that ships with food for France had recently passed through the Straits. He asked when we should be in a position to re-establish our blockade.

The First Sea Lord informed the War Cabinet of the reasons, connected with Naval dispositions, which made it impossible to enforce our blockade in the Gibraltar area until at least 48 hours from the 25th October.
A discussion took place on the position in French West Africa, a record of which is contained in the Secretary's Standard File of War Cabinet Conclusions.

The War Cabinet:

(a) Took note of the above statements.
(b) Invited the Foreign Secretary to arrange, in consultation with the War Office, for a British military representative to proceed to Tangier with the object of establishing relations with General Weygand.
(c) Invited the Dominions Secretary to inform the Canadian Government that they thought it would be of advantage if the Canadian representatives accredited to the Belgian, Dutch and Vichy Governments were to proceed to Vichy.
(d) Invited the Foreign Secretary to furnish the Dominions Secretary with particulars of the points on which information from Vichy would be specially valuable.

U.S.S.R.
(Previous References: W.M. (40) 274th Conclusions, Minute 3; and W.M. (40) 271st Conclusions, Minute 4.)

7. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs said that Sir Stafford Cripps had now spoken to Vyshinsky on the lines authorised by the War Cabinet on the 15th October (Telegrams Nos. 911-913 from Moscow). Vyshinsky had said that, in view of the importance of this communication, he must consult his authorities before commenting on it.

The Foreign Secretary said that the action taken to requisition the ships belonging to the Baltic States had been due to a misunderstanding in his Department. We had not actually countermanded this action, but we had told Sir Stafford Cripps that we were prepared to do so if he was satisfied that the requisitioning of these ships would spoil the chances of successful negotiations with the U.S.S.R. Some 37,000 tons of shipping was involved. Even, however, if we could not requisition these ships, we might still obtain the use of them by some other method.

The War Cabinet took note of this statement.

8. The Chief of the Air Staff reported that enemy activity on the previous day had been on a reduced scale, only 35 machines being involved. One enemy aircraft had been damaged by our fighters, without loss to ourselves.

The previous night only 100 German machines had been over this country, 25 having been over London. Many of these machines had flown from Norway, probably on account of the weather being better in the North than in the South.

On the previous night 95 of our bombers had been despatched to attack enemy targets, which included ports, shipping, industrial plant and Berlin. Three of our bombers were missing. One which had come down in the sea was being searched for.

The Chief of the Air Staff undertook to enquire what progress had been made with experiments to enable our machines to give a better indication of their whereabouts when they came down on the sea.

Two enemy merchant ships (of 4,000 tons and 2,000 tons) had been torpedoed by our aircraft off the Dutch coast.
On the 22nd October Fort Maddalena had been attacked to create a diversion and to deny the enemy the use of the landing ground at Bir Shegga. The water pipe-line and road between Sollum and Buq Buq had been straddled and hits had been made on M.T. vehicles.

Kassala had been bombed and direct hits obtained on fuel dumps to the west of the fort.

The S.A.A.F. had carried out a bombing operation against Birkao.

The Italians had bombed Perim on the 22nd October, but no damage or casualties had resulted.

**The Chief of Naval Staff** reported that British naval forces were operating off the coast of Norway. One unit had sunk an enemy ship of 400 tons. No news had yet been received from the second force.

No ships had been lost on the previous day. Two more vessels from the convoy which had suffered heavy losses over the week-end had reached port.

The third consignment of 50,000 rifles from the batch of 250,000 now in transit from the United States of America had been safely landed.

The Prime Minister referred to the reduction in the A.A. defences at Rosyth, and asked the Chiefs of Staff to enquire into the position.

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff said that he had received no confirmation of the report that had appeared in that morning's Press, to the effect that British armoured forces had inflicted losses amounting to 400 killed and wounded on the Italians in the Sudan.

One enemy colonial battalion had moved north up Khor Uffat to the Nile at Maganza, with patrols in the area of Wisko. There had been enemy movement westwards during the night of the 20th towards Jebal Gargana, a few miles west of Maganza.

The War Cabinet:

(i) Took note of the above.

(ii) Invited the Chiefs of Staff to enquire into the anti-aircraft ground defences at Rosyth, and to report to the War Cabinet.

The War Cabinet approved this suggestion.
Coal.

Supplies for London and the South.

The War Cabinet had before them a Memorandum by the Lord President of the Council (W.P. (G.) (40) 269), reporting the position in regard to the transport of coal to London and the South of England.

The Lord President of the Council said that as a result of air attack there had been congestion in the marshalling yards. To deal with this difficulty, arrangements had been made to find alternative consignees who would take delivery of coal which could not be accepted by the original consignees. Should the alternative consignee be unable to take delivery, the coal would be diverted to Government dumps in the London area.

Another difficulty had been the blocking of the North to South communications across the Thames. It was proposed to deal with this by sending more coal by sea to South Thames and Medway ports. Additional small craft were being put into the coal trade and the Admiralty had agreed to increase to 16 the number of vessels in convoys.

As a long-term project steps were being taken to establish large dumps on the periphery of the London area, so that coal could be brought by rail to the periphery, and delivered thence by road transport, should the situation in the London area deteriorate to a point at which coal could not be handled by rail inside the area.

In reply to a question the Lord President said that he agreed that more use could be made of canals; probably another 100,000 tons a year could be carried in this way.

The Secretary for Mines said that 9 million tons more coal was stacked in the country than this time last year, including 1½ million more in the London area. This latter figure represented London's consumption for one month. The position was, however, serious from the production end. Owing to the fact that the coal could not be got away from the pits, and, to a lesser extent, to enemy interference, the rate of production was being slowed down. Unemployment in the coal mines had also increased owing to the loss of foreign markets.

The War Cabinet—

(1) Took note of the above statements and invited the Lord President of the Council to continue to keep this matter under review.

(2) Invited the Lord President of the Council to press for the fullest use to be made of canals to relieve the coal transport situation.

The Moslems.

Proposal that His Majesty's Government should provide a site for a Mosque in London.

11. The War Cabinet—

(a) Approved in principle the proposal contained in the Joint Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, the Secretary of State for India and the Secretary of State for the Colonies (W.P. (G.) (40) 268) that a sum not exceeding £100,000 should be provided from the Exchequer for the acquisition of a site for a mosque in London.

(b) Invited the Secretary of State for the Colonies to be responsible for carrying this matter through and making the necessary public announcement.

(c) Invited the Secretary of State for the Colonies to consult with the Chancellor of the Exchequer in regard to the arrangements for the purchase and provision of the necessary funds.

Richmond Terrace, S.W. 1,
October 24, 1940.
CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the War Cabinet, held in the Cabinet War Room, S.W. 1, on Friday, October 25, 1940, at 11-30 A.M.

Present:

The Right Hon. WINSTON S. CHURCHILL, M.P., Prime Minister (in the Chair).


The Right Hon. VISCOUNT HALIFAX, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Items 1-5).

The Right Hon. LORD BEAVERBROOK, Minister of Aircraft Production.

The Right Hon. ERNEST BEVIN, M.P., Minister of Labour and National Service.

The following were also present:

The Right Hon. HERBERT MORRISON, M.P., Secretary of State for the Home Department and Minister of Home Security.

The Right Hon. LORD LLOYD, Secretary of State for the Colonies (Item 5).

The Right Hon. Sir ARCHIBALD SINCLAIR, Bt., M.P., Secretary of State for Air.

Lieut.-Colonel The Right Hon. J. T. C. MOORE-BRABAZON, M.P., Minister of Transport (Items 6-8).

The Right Hon. A. DUFF COOPER, M.P., Minister of Information.

General Sir JOHN DILL, Chief of the Imperial General Staff.

The Right Hon. VISCOUNT CRANBORNE, M.P., Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs (Items 1-5).

The Right Hon. A. V. ALEXANDER, M.P., First Lord of the Admiralty (Items 1-5).

The Right Hon. MALCOLM MACDONALD, M.P., Minister of Health (Items 5-8).

Air Chief Marshal Sir CHARLES PORTAL, Chief of the Air Staff (Items 1-5).

Secretariat:

Sir EDWARD BRIDGES.

Major-General Sir HASTINGS ISMAY.

Mr. W. D. WILKINSON.

Mr. L. F. BURGIS.
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The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs said that in the early hours of that morning a telegram had been received (No. 906) from Sir Samuel Hoare at Madrid. The French Ambassador had told him that the Prime Minister's message was likely to have a great effect on the French Council of Ministers. M. Laval and Admiral Darlan were pressing hard for agreement with the Germans over the transfer of the French Fleet and French bases to Germany, whilst Marshal Pétain and General Weygand were resisting. He (the French Ambassador) believed that, if either the King or the Prime Minister could send a message through him to Marshal Pétain, such a message might turn the scales in our favour. The telegram went on to suggest the terms of a suitable message.

A further telegram had followed (No. 908) asking for authority to tell the French Ambassador in Madrid that such a message would be sent.

The Foreign Secretary, continuing, said that the Prime Minister and himself had drafted an appeal to Marshal Pétain to be sent to him from the King. This telegram (see Appendix) was now being despatched to Sir Samuel Hoare for communication to the French Ambassador.

The Prime Minister said that he hoped the War Cabinet would approve of the action which the Foreign Secretary and himself had taken. On the previous Sunday he had himself sent a personal telegram to President Roosevelt in regard to the danger of the French handing over to Germany their fleet and bases, and had suggested that he might take action to deter the French from carrying out this proposal. (See Minute 7 below.)

Copies of the telegrams received from Sir Samuel Hoare and of the message from the King to Marshal Pétain were being sent to Washington in order that the President might be kept au courant with events. He was also telegraphing to Washington suggesting that the President should himself send a personal message to Marshal Pétain to the effect that the United States would view with grave concern the handing over of French bases to Germany.

The Prime Minister added that he and the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs had considered making a personal appeal to General Weygand, but on reflection had thought that for the moment it would be sufficient if he was kept informed of what was happening through our Consul-General at Tangier, to whom copies of the relevant telegrams were being sent for communication to the General.

The Prime Minister said that, if the French Fleet and Naval bases were transferred to Germany, our navy would be faced with the most serious problems, and the situation would be an anxious one.

The War Cabinet—

(a) Approved of the action recorded above which had been taken by the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

(b) Invited the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to acquaint the Dominion Prime Ministers with the situation.
2. The Prime Minister welcomed Air-Marshal Portal on his appointment as Chief of the Air Staff.

The Chief of the Air Staff reported that on the previous night 170 enemy bombers had flown over this country, but only 50 had attacked London. Birmingham had been heavily attacked. On the previous night one of our Beaufighters had intercepted an enemy machine, and had fired at it with its cannon. No result had been obtained, though it was thought that the enemy had been hit.

On the previous night one of our bombers had been shot down in flames by enemy aircraft when taking off from its aerodrome.

On the previous night 128 of our aircraft had been despatched to attack the Channel Ports, oil targets, aluminium targets, communications in the Ruhr, and 20 to attack a target in the Berlin area. Although full reports had not yet been received it was thought that these attacks had been successful.

The Secretary of State for the Home Department and Minister of Home Security said that, although little military damage had been done in Birmingham on the previous night, considerable damage had been done in the centre of the town. The two railway stations had been hit and also the Town Hall and Midland Hotel. Damage in the London area had been negligible. So far as had been reported the civilian casualties for the previous night had been 2 killed and 87 injured in the London area, and 8 killed and 46 injured in the Provinces.

The Chief of Naval Staff reported that it was now known that three more ships in the slow convoy which had been attacked over the week-end had been sunk. Out of thirty-five ships in this slow convoy fifteen had been sunk and five damaged.

It was hoped that the increased number of destroyers which it had been decided should be used for escort duties would be operating by the 15th November.

The First Lord of the Admiralty said that one disturbing feature in the week-end attack was an unconfirmed report that one of the Swedish ships had shown a red light.

The fourth group of United States destroyers was now on its way across the Atlantic, and would probably be put straight into service.

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff made the following report:

A battalion with supporting artillery had raided an enemy camp 14 miles east of Sidi Barrani on the 22nd/23rd October and had destroyed eight M.T. with Molotov bombs. Our casualties had been three killed and four wounded. Enemy casualties were unknown, but one prisoner had been captured.

A patrol of the Sudan Defence Force had surprised 1,000 enemy and had attacked them in the rear from 100 yards. Enemy casualties had been heavy. We had suffered no losses. In the Blue Nile sector no enemy advance had been reported north of the line Maganza to Jebel Gardada.

Two enemy aircraft had raided Port Sudan on the 23rd October and dropped bombs near the quay. No material damage had been done, but ten natives had been killed and about twenty injured.

The second convoy of the South African Brigade (3,000 personnel) had arrived at Mombasa on the 21st October.
No confirmation had been received of the rumours of an impending Italian attack on Greece. It seemed possible that the Italians thought that the visit of the Secretary of State for War to Egypt was connected with a coming offensive on our part.

The War Cabinet took note of the above statements.

3. The War Cabinet had before them a Memorandum by the First Lord of the Admiralty (W.P. (40) 349) making proposals for additional new naval construction and for an early resumption of work on ships on which work had been suspended.

In regard to the main types of ships, his proposals were as follows:

**Battleships.**

Work should be pushed ahead on the *Hmce* and *Vanguard*. *Lion* and *Téméraire* (both of which had been laid down) should be proceeded with as men and material could be made available. *Conqueror* and *Thunderer* should not be laid down at once, but should be started as soon as practicable.

**Aircraft-carriers.**

Work on the *Indefatigable* should be resumed and one additional vessel considered early in 1941.

**Cruisers.**

Work should proceed on the 8 suspended cruisers and 4 of a new type laid down in March 1941.

**Destroyers.**

Work should proceed on the 4th Emergency Flotilla and two additional flotillas should be ordered in December 1940 and March 1941 respectively.

In addition, 14 sloops, 30 corvettes and 38 submarines, and a large number of miscellaneous craft, should be laid down.

The following points were made in discussion:

1. The Chancellor of the Exchequer asked whether the First Lord’s programme would interfere with merchant ship building. The First Lord of the Admiralty said that capacity for merchant ship building, at the rate of 1,250,000 tons a year, would not be interfered with.

2. Doubt was expressed whether the First Lord’s programme could be carried out without interference with the programmes of the other Services. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said that, while the need for small ships could not be contested, different arguments applied to capital ships, which could not be completed until 1943, 1944 or 1945.

3. It was argued that, if these capital ships were being built to meet the contingency of a war with Japan in 1943 or 1944, we could fairly assume that the United States Navy would then be on our side.

4. The Prime Minister referred to his recent paper on Priorities (W.P. (40) 416), and thought that very powerful arguments had been advanced by the First Lord in favour of proceeding with all the suspended ships. At the end of the war we should be faced with the formidable task of clearing up the situation in the Far East, and we...
should be unequal to that task if we fell behind Japan in capital ship construction. It took four years or more to build a capital ship, and he thought it was essential to make progress towards the completion of a number of these powerful vessels. The potentialities of capital ships for altering a military situation were very great indeed.

(5) The Prime Minister said he had reached the conclusion that work must be resumed on the capital ships to which the First Lord had referred, on the understanding that further delays might be imposed by shortages of steel or other necessary materials. In that event, the Admiralty would have to advance their completion dates.

(6) The Minister of Aircraft Production referred to the possible competition between the programme of his Department and the First Lord’s programme.

In discussion it was pointed out that the programme would make relatively small demands for alloy steel or aluminium. It was clear that the Admiralty would have to economise in regard to the latter. As regards machine tools, the programme would be kept under constant review, in consultation with the other production Departments.

(7) The Chief of the Imperial General Staff said that he was about to consult the Admiralty regarding the number of landing craft included in the programme. Prima facie, the provision proposed was inadequate to meet Army requirements.

The War Cabinet—
Gave general approval to the proposals in W.P. (40) 349, subject to:

(a) The normal consultations taking place between the Treasury and the Admiralty at various stages in the programme.
(b) The general understanding that further delays might be imposed by shortages of steel and other necessary materials, in which event the completion dates would have to be advanced.

4. In connection with the previous Minute, the Prime Minister drew attention to the very heavy demands being made by the Army for wheeled vehicles. The scale of these demands was based on the operations of a division under mobile conditions. In addition, however, substantial margins were allowed for various contingencies, and the full scale was applied to training units and to forces allocated to fixed defence positions. In the result, the total demand was far beyond real requirements.

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff said that the War Office appreciated that the Tank programme would suffer if the production of wheeled vehicles was not kept within bounds. The matter was under examination by a War Office Committee.

The Prime Minister suggested that a Treasury representative should be added to this Committee. The use of horse transport should also be examined.

The Minister of Labour and National Service suggested that Army lorries should be lent to relieve transport congestion at the docks. Army interests could be safeguarded by lending lorries only to reputable firms with good repair depots.
The Chief of the Imperial General Staff said that the divisions now in this country were by no means well equipped with transport. In view of the invasion risk, ammunition lorries could not be released. The War Office would, however, examine whether a number of supply lorries could be lent to civil industry.

The War Cabinet took note that the War Office would examine the Minister of Labour's suggestion.

5. The War Cabinet had before them a Memorandum by the Secretary of State for the Colonies and the Minister of Health (W.P. (G) (40) 273) as to some 10,000 Gibraltarians who had been compulsorily evacuated from Gibraltar and were temporarily accommodated in London. Arrangements had been made to accommodate them in the West Indies, but since the loss of the City of Benares, and the decision not to proceed with the Children's Overseas Reception Scheme, they had been in a difficult mood. Some 500 of these evacuees were now prepared to go overseas voluntarily, but compulsion might be necessary to get the whole party to go.

The First Lord of the Admiralty said that if the party of 500 referred to in W.P. (G) (40) 273 was the only one concerned, the Navy could provide a sufficient escort. He considered, however, that, with the present position in the North Western Approaches, no further sailings of this kind should be arranged until the Admiralty had tested the results of the new convoy arrangements about to be put into force on trial. He asked that no arrangement for any further shipments should be made without personal consultation with him.

The Minister of Health said that there was no question of the whole party proceeding overseas at once, but they would go in relays.

The Prime Minister thought that the Gibraltarians ought to go overseas and that they should be made to understand that we were determined that they should go. Their attitude could be altered by propaganda.

In reply to a question by the Minister of Labour, the Colonial Secretary admitted that the conditions on the ships in which the evacuees had been brought here from Morocco had been bad. This was because it had been necessary to use the cargo-liners used to repatriate French troops from this country.

The Minister of Shipping said that good passenger vessels would be used for the voyage to the West Indies.

The War Cabinet—

(a) Invited the Colonial Secretary, the Minister of Health and the Minister of Shipping to make arrangements forthwith for the shipment to the West Indies of the 500 volunteers.

(b) Invited the Colonial Secretary and the Minister of Health to make suitable arrangements to induce the other Gibraltarian evacuees, by effective propaganda, to proceed to the West Indies as and when suitable shipping arrangements could be made. It should be made clear to the Gibraltarians that the Government adhered to their decision that they should proceed overseas.

(c) Invited the Minister of Shipping to keep the First Lord of the Admiralty informed as to the sailing arrangements made and in contemplation for these evacuees, having regard to the First Lord's responsibilities in regard to escorts.
6. The War Cabinet had before them a Memorandum by the Minister of Home Security on Improved Street Lighting (W.P. (G) (40) 272). The question for immediate decision was whether a Circular should be issued to Local Authorities to ascertain their views on the scheme set out in the Report of the Black-out Committee (W.P. (40) 375), and to invite them to prepare plans for their areas.

The Minister of Home Security said that his impression was that, as the result of the intense night bombing on this country, public opinion was now very sensitive on lighting questions, and that proposals to improve street lighting would not be well received at this juncture. Further, the Local Authority staffs concerned were already hard pressed. The cost was £500,000, and the view hitherto taken had been that, as a local amenity was concerned, the cost should be borne by the Local Authorities. They were unlikely to be willing to bear this cost.

The Prime Minister thought the view that the enemy bombers guided themselves by ground lights was not well founded. The scheme to improve street lighting should not be allowed to fall into such a state of abeyance that it would take a long time to put into effect if conditions eased.

The Secretary of State for Air said that the Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Fighter Command, held that, in present circumstances, it would be impracticable to operate a system of improved street lighting in Southern England.

The War Cabinet:—

(1) Agreed that a Circular should not be issued to Local Authorities, but that their opinion on this matter should be ascertained by the Minister of Home Security by personal consultation;
(2) Agreed that this matter should be brought forward again to the War Cabinet at the beginning of December;
(3) Invited the Minister of Home Security to take such steps as were possible to proceed with preparatory measures, without, however, incurring any substantial expenditure on the scheme.

7. The Prime Minister read the terms of a message sent by President Roosevelt to the French Government protesting against any action by the French Government permitting the Germans to use the French Fleet against the British Fleet. This telegram had been sent in response to a suggestion which the Prime Minister had made on the previous Sunday (see Minute 1 above). The President's telegram was expressed in the strongest terms, but it was noted that it related mainly to action which permitted the Germans to use the French Fleet, and did not deal with the use by the enemy of French bases.

The War Cabinet agreed that it would be desirable that this further aspect of the question should be brought to the President's notice.

8. The War Cabinet had before them a Memorandum by the Minister of Home Security (W.P. (G) (40) 271), putting forward proposals to reduce the number of persons travelling to and from the centre of London without disturbing the national war effort. These proposals had been put forward by the Interdepartmental Committee under the chairmanship of the Minister of Transport, and had been considered and approved by the Civil Defence Executive Sub-Committee.
The main proposals, and the points made thereon in discussion, were as follows:

(1) **Evacuation.**—It was proposed to encourage certain classes of business to leave London, without prejudice to the needs of the homeless and of mothers and children.

General agreement was expressed with this suggestion provided that publicity was avoided. The matter would be dealt with by unofficial contacts with trade associations and individual firms.

It was explained that 900 firms had made plans to leave London before the war, but had mainly planned to go either to the South-Eastern Counties (which were now difficult for military reasons) or to Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire, which had now been largely filled up by unofficial evacuation from London. It was therefore proposed to guide the firms, so far as possible, to the Midlands and the North. This could be done while still leaving room for dispersal from the big centres of population in the Midlands.

(2) **Early Closing and avoidance of peak hours.**—Arrangements would be made to discuss with the interests concerned the closing of shops at a progressively earlier hour, not later than 3 p.m. at the extreme. The availability of cheap day return tickets would be curtailed.

(3) **Sleeping at places of business.**—Firms with suitable protected accommodation would be asked to allow a proportion of their staff to sleep on the premises.

(4) **Alteration of holidays and (5) Adjustment of hours.**—It was proposed to discuss with employers and with the T.U.C. proposals for:

(a) different day or half-day holidays for different trades or businesses.

(b) a five-day week, spread over six days, or a six-day week with shorter hours on each day.

(c) an adjustment of hours to enable staff to leave early.

In regard to (2) to (5) generally, the Minister of Aircraft Production feared that proposals that shops should close at 3 p.m., or for a five-day week, if put forward by the Government, would react on hours of work in factories. [Earlier in the summer, the grant to Civil Servants of a fortnight's holiday had reacted on the factories.] He cited in support of this view a suggestion made in the course of the Meeting by the Minister of Labour and National Service that provision should be made for a number of munitions workers to sleep at their factories, in order to increase the amount of night work.

The view generally expressed in discussion was that it was impossible to lay down uniform rules applicable to all classes of the community, and that different conditions applied to Civil Servants and persons working in shops than to munition workers. Further, it was suggested that the earlier closing of shops could be linked up with the curtailment of hours during which cheap day return tickets were available, as a policy designed to keep the transport facilities at the peak hours open for munitions workers and other persons engaged in essential war work.

This view met with the general approval of the War Cabinet. (6) **Summer-time.**—This should be continued during the winter.

(7) **Transport Services.**—Various proposals were being made to improve facilities.

The Minister of Labour and National Service said that the need for express buses was not limited to London, but existed also in other towns, notably Bristol.

The Minister of Transport undertook to look into this point.
(8) Private car drivers would be asked to carry as many passengers as possible.

The War Cabinet:
Gave general approval to the recommendations in the Report outlined above, subject to the points referred to at "X" and "Y."

Richmond Terrace, S.W. 1,
October 25, 1940.

APPENDIX.

Cypher Telegram to Sir S. Hoare (Madrid).
(No. 935. Most Immediate.)
Foreign Office, October 25, 1940, 1.20 P.M.
MY telegram No. 933 [of 25th October: Message for Marshal Pétain].
Please convey to your French colleague following message from His Majesty The King to Marshal Pétain:—

"M. le Marechal,

At this serious juncture in the life of the British and French peoples, I send you a message of goodwill. The armistice which you were forced to make with the common enemy and his occupation of so many French ports and aerodromes for the attack on my country have been a very grievous addition to the burdens which my people have to bear. Nevertheless, these tragic events have not weakened in British hearts the sympathy and sense of comradeship which have grown up over many years of peace and war between the British and French nations. We are resolved to fight on to the end, and we are sure that the end will be a complete British victory over Hitler and his régime. We have solemnly declared that our victory will carry with it the restoration of the freedom and greatness of France.

Reports are reaching me of an attempt by the German Government to secure from you undertakings that would go far beyond the terms accepted by you at the time of the armistice. I recall that then you expressed your determination to accept no terms dishonouring to the name of France. I am confident that now also you will reject proposals that would bring dishonour to France and grave damage to a late ally. The disaster that overwhelmed France deprived us of her assistance but it would indeed be a sombre event in history if France were to range herself against us and afford direct assistance to our enemy. I do not doubt that, in refusing any such proposals that may have been made, you will carry with you the overwhelming assent of all those among both our peoples, and in other countries, who have put their faith in your honour as a soldier and who see in a British victory their hope of the salvation of France."

(Repeateb to Washington, No. 2791.)
DEPARTMENTAL (SECRET).


24th October, 1940.

D. 10.50 p.m. 24th October, 1940.

R. 2.30 a.m. 25th October, 1940.

No. 908.

xxxxxxx

MOST IMMEDIATE.

Following for Prime Minister.

My telegram No. 906.

SECRET.

Please authorise me immediately to tell the French Ambassador who has visited me urgently again, that the King or you are sending a further message to Pétain. This announcement may enable the Ambassador to hold up negotiations in Paris and forestall Laval. A message from the King to Pétain would carry immense weight.

As negotiations will be resumed in Paris tomorrow, please let me have answer by mid-day. The full message can arrive later.

[Sent to Private Secretary, No. 10 Downing Street, at 3.45 a.m.]
DEPARTMENTAL. (SECRET).

24th October, 1940.

D. 10.30 p.m. 24th October, 1940.
R. 2.20 a.m. 25th October, 1940.

No. 906.

MOST IMMEDIATE.

MOST SECRET.

Following for the Prime Minister.

French Ambassador told me this evening that the Prime Minister's message (see my telegram No. 900) is likely to have great effect on French Council of Ministers. M. Laval and Darlan are pressing hard for agreement with the Germans over transfer of fleet and bases, whilst Petain and Weygand are resisting.

Ambassador believes that if the Prime Minister could immediately send me a similar message, expressed in solemn and friendly words that could be transmitted verbatim to the Marshal himself, it might turn the scales in our favour. Such a message should take into account, and if possible mention, Petain's loyalty to his signature binding him to the terms of the Armistice. It should therefore be made clear that German demands go far beyond the Armistice terms.

Message should end with personal appeal to Petain to respond to your unselfish offer, and to make clear to the world the French determination to repudiate dishonourable terms. Ambassador believes, not only would such a message strengthen Petain's hands, but also prove a damning document against M. Laval if it was decided to publish it.

Ambassador has with great deference suggested, in order to give message greatest possible solemnity, it might be sent to Petain in the name of the King.

[Sent to Private Secretary, No. 10, Downing Street, at 3.45 a.m.]
Cypher telegram to Mr. Butler (Washington).

Foreign Office. 25th October, 1940. 12.10 p.m.

No. 2789

MOST IMMEDIATE.

Please convey following message from Prime Minister to President immediately.

(Begins): Our Ambassador will have told you about the telegrams we have received from and sent to Sir Samuel Hoare in Madrid, and the views of the French Ambassador there.

There seems to be a desperate struggle going on between Pétain and Laval. If the French Fleet and French bases on the African shore are betrayed to Germany, our task will become vastly more difficult, and your dangers will grow. I have the feeling things are hanging in the balance at Vichy. The King is sending a personal message to Marshal Pétain, appealing to his soldierly honour. Would it not be possible for you, Mr. President, to send a message to him yourself? It would greatly strengthen his position and might make him choose rightly. Anyhow there is no time to be lost as a very disastrous turn may be very easily be given to the war by the Vichy Government committing another act of shame. (Ends).
CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held in the Cabinet War Room, S.W. 1, on Monday, October 28, 1940, at 5 P.M.

Present:

The Right Hon. Winston S. Churchill, M.P., Prime Minister (in the Chair).
The Right Hon. Viscount Halifax, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.
The Right Hon. Lord Beaverbrook, Minister of Aircraft Production.
The Right Hon. A. Duff Cooper, M.P., Minister of Information.
Admiral of the Fleet Sir Dudley Pound, First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff.

The following were also present:
The Right Hon. A. Duff Cooper, M.P., Minister of Information.
Admiral of the Fleet Sir Dudley Pound, First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff.

Secretariat.

Sir Edward Bridges.
Major-General Sir Hastings Ismay.
Mr. W. D. Wilkinson.
Mr. L. F. Burgis.
## WAR CABINET 278 (40).

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1. The Secretary of State for Air reported that the casualties for the previous day's operations over and around this country had been:—

**Our own**—
10 machines.
(4 pilots safe.)

**Enemy**—
9 certain.
7 probable.
9 damaged.

By night enemy activity had been similar to previous nights, but on a slightly reduced scale. An extensive dusk attack had been made on bomber and fighter aerodromes, but our losses had been comparatively light.

Our aircraft detailed to attack targets in Germany had achieved satisfactory results.

Three Beauforts of the Coastal Command had sunk a German vessel and had then been engaged by 12 Messerschmitts. Two Beauforts and 1 Messerschmitt had been brought down.

In the Middle East 3 Vincents had dive-bombed buildings north-west of Kassala.

The First Sea Lord reported that the Empress of Britain, which had been bombed and set on fire on the 26th October, 90 miles west of Bloody Foreland, had been sunk early that morning, while in tow, probably by torpedo. The casualties might be as few as 40, although one party had still to be accounted for.

The War Cabinet were informed of the movements of the Mediterranean Fleet. Their recent operations had included a sweep towards the Dardanelles.

Italian motor transport had been bombed by aircraft of the Fleet Air Arm and the R.A.F. east of Sidi Barrani.

Up to date we had lost 7 submarines, and the Italians some 27 submarines in the Mediterranean. The former total included two which were now overdue in the Mediterranean, and which had been patrolling near the mouth of the Adriatic Sea. The Italians claimed to have torpedoed a British submarine recently in this area.

H.M.S. Neptune was patrolling to the south of the Indian Ocean, with the object of discovering what had become of the crews of a number of merchant vessels which had been sunk in the Indian Ocean during the last six months. She had visited Kerguelen Island, where she had found signs of previous enemy activity in the shape of an abandoned camp and a cliff which had been used for target practice.

Off Duala we had intercepted a French vessel of about 4,000 tons, carrying timber for the Vichy Government. H.M.S. Devonshire was patrolling off Libreville.

In the Red Sea there was confirmation from air photographs that we had sunk the Italian destroyer Francesco Nullo. Another Italian destroyer, which we had bombed off Harmil Island, had either sunk or been towed away.
Military Operations.

Greece.

Invasion by Italy.
(Previous Reference: W.M. (40) 277th Conclusions, Minute 2.)

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff said that there was nothing to report beyond active patrolling in the Kassala sector. On 23rd October a patrol had encountered a party of the enemy, estimated at 500 strong, who were digging and wiring in an area 20 miles south of Kassala. The enemy had withdrawn.

The War Cabinet took note of the above statements.

2. The War Cabinet were informed that following on the Italian ultimatum—delivered to Greece at 3.0 A.M. that morning, and refused by the Greek Government—an attack on Greece had begun. Unconfirmed reports stated that Athens had been bombed and that 10 Italian divisions, consisting of perhaps 200,000 men, were moving into Greece through the difficult country on the Albanian border.

The Greek Army consisted of 14 divisions, or something over 200,000 men; but they were very short of equipment and in particular of anti-aircraft guns.

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs said that General Metaxas had asked for our immediate help by sea to defend Corfu, by air to defend Athens and by financial assistance. (Athens telegram No. 994.) The Greek Minister in London had made a similar request.

A discussion took place on possible methods of assisting Greece, which is recorded in the Secretary's Standard Pile of War Cabinet Conclusions.

3. Arising out of the preceding Minute, the question was raised whether, as the result of the Italian attack on Greece, the United States of America would be more willing to make aircraft and other equipment immediately available.

The Prime Minister said that nothing which was available at short notice would be likely to affect the immediate situation. He had, however, received a telegram (No. 2408) from Sir Walter Layton, putting forward a scheme for increasing the continued munitions output of Britain and America. The scheme was that this country should immediately place orders in the United States of America for equipment of American types for 10 divisions. These orders would be supplementary to, and not in substitution for, orders already placed in the United States for the British Army programme. The scheme involved us in no capital expenditure and in no financial commitments until delivery was made to us from the United States War Department contractors.

A message had been despatched saying that we gladly accepted this proposal.

The War Cabinet took note of this statement.

4. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs said he had received no confirmation of the report that M. Laval had replaced M. Baudouin at the French Foreign Office.

The Foreign Secretary said that he had had further talks with M. Rouvier, who had come over to this country the previous week. In his earlier talks M. Rougier had stated emphatically that the Marshal would not accept the German terms regarding the cession of bases. That morning he had adhered to this statement, but he had been disturbed. He had said that, as he could not return to Vichy in time to be of any service he thought it would be useful if he went to Tangier and saw General Weygand.
and General Noguès. After consultation with the Prime Minister he (the Foreign Secretary) had told M. Rougier that we should be prepared for him to do this. Before leaving, however, it was desirable that M. Rougier should put on paper the kind of statements he proposed to make to General Weygand.

Continuing, the Foreign Secretary said that M. Rougier thought that General Weygand would react very sharply if the French had accepted German terms such as had been suggested in the press. Should the General be in a mood critical of the Vichy Government, he would wish to know if we would be in a position to keep the Spanish Division in Morocco quiet, and would also wish to know whether we could help in the way of supplies. To this he (the Foreign Secretary) had said that he could not give precise answers, but we should be prepared to receive any accredited persons the General might wish to send and help them to the utmost of our power. Finally, M. Rougier had said that General Weygand would be profoundly impressed by the report he would give him of the state of affairs in London and the way it was standing up to the German bombing. The General believed that London had been flattened out.

The Prime Minister said that it was extraordinary that neither we nor the Americans should have received any information as to what had happened in the negotiations between the Germans and the Vichy Government. The Vichy Government might have agreed to join the German bloc without having the intention of adopting a more hostile attitude towards this country than they had in the last few months. The worst position from our point of view would be if the Vichy Government had agreed to hand over French bases to Germany and if General Weygand remained the servant of the Vichy Government. In that event our position at Gibraltar might become untenable. A number of plans had been prepared, or were in course of preparation, to meet this contingency. They would not, of course, be put into effect until the position at Vichy became clear.

The War Cabinet took note of this statement.

5. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs said that the report that had been received the previous evening that General de Gaulle had set up a rival Government was obviously untrue. It was perhaps tiresome that he should have chosen this moment to set up a Council of Defence without prior consultation with us. But the correspondence which had passed with General de Gaulle provided for the setting up of a Council of Defence in due course.

The War Cabinet took note of this statement.

6. In connection with Minute 4, reference was made to the provision of condensing plant at Gibraltar to supplement the stored water reserve. It was suggested that this matter should have been taken in hand at an earlier date and pressed more resolutely.

The War Cabinet—

Invited the Chief of the Imperial General Staff to submit a report on the steps taken to provide this plant and the time necessary to complete the installation.
7. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff drew attention to an article in the *Daily Mail* that morning, complaining that the War Office were refusing to allow the Army to take its share in essential work on the home front in the heavily bombed areas. The fact was that, although the Army was short of training, no demands on the Army for labour had been refused. The Minister of Home Security confirmed this statement.

The Prime Minister said that it should be brought home to public opinion that our Army could not be properly trained for war if it was continuously used for work which could be done by navvies. At the same time, the Army could, of course, properly be called upon to assist the Civil Defence Services in cases of emergency.

In further discussion, the Minister of Labour and National Service said that so far he had been able to meet all the demands for labour which had been made on his Department.

It was also pointed out that the civilian labour employed on these duties would have to be engaged for continuous work, and organised in regular groups. The first essential was that the organisation for this purpose should be set up. Much had now been done in this direction.

The War Cabinet were also informed that public opinion felt strongly that insufficient work was being done on clearing away debris. This had a depressing effect on morale, and it might well be necessary to ask the Army if they could spare a further number of men for a limited period until the arrears had been overtaken.

The War Cabinet—

1. Endorsed the view that a civilian labour force should be organised for the work of clearing away debris and making good air raid damage. The Army should only be called upon to do this work in emergency, or for a short period until the labour force could be organised and arrears overtaken.

2. Invited the Ministers concerned to consult together in order to concert the necessary arrangements to this end.

3. Invited the Minister of Information, after consultation with the Ministers concerned, to explain this policy to the public, and at the same to make it clear—

   (a) That the time of the Army must be spent in intensive military training.

   (b) That the War Office had not refused calls made on the Army for labour to meet temporary emergencies.

8. The War Cabinet had before them Memoranda by the Secretary of State for Air and the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs (W.P. (40) 424 and 426), on the supply of aircraft to New Zealand.

The Secretary of State for Air said that he proposed that 18 Hudsons should be shipped direct to New Zealand from the United States of America during the next two months. He supported this proposal on the following grounds: New Zealand had relinquished her claim to 30 Wellington aircraft at the beginning of the war. Since then she had repeatedly pressed for the supply of up-to-date aircraft, the need for which was increased by the presence of a suspected raider in New Zealand waters and by Japan's attitude of increasing hostility. The supply of Hudson
aircraft in prospect during the next two months showed a surplus beyond that required for the maintenance of the five squadrons equipped with Hudsons.

In discussion, the view was generally expressed that we could not afford to send these aircraft to New Zealand at the present juncture.

The First Lord of the Admiralty said that all the available aircraft were needed for work in the North-West Approaches. If the Secretary of State for Air could not use these Hudson aircraft to equip a new squadron, he would be glad if they could be handed over to the Fleet Air Arm.

The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs said that New Zealand would be greatly disappointed if these aircraft could not be supplied, but the matter must be settled by the military needs of the moment. He thought that New Zealand should be informed that, while these aircraft could not be spared now, we would supply them with up-to-date aircraft as soon as we could manage to do so.

The War Cabinet—

Decided that 18 Hudson aircraft could not be spared for supply to New Zealand at this juncture, and that a communication should be sent to the New Zealand Government on the lines suggested by the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs.

*Richmond Terrace, S.W. 1,  
October 28, 1940.*
CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the War Cabinet, held in the Cabinet War Room, S.W. 1, on Tuesday, October 29, 1940, at 12 Noon.

Present:

The Right Hon. WINSTON S. CHURCHILL, M.P., Prime Minister (in the Chair).
The Right Hon. VISCOUNT HALIFAX, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.
The Right Hon. LORD BEAVERBROOK, Minister of Aircraft Production.
The Right Hon. ERNEST BEVIN, M.P., Minister of Labour and Minister of National Service.
The Right Hon. VISCOUNT SIMON, Lord Chancellor.
The Right Hon. VISCOUNT CRANBORNE, M.P., Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs.
The Right Hon. LORD LLOYD, Secretary of State for the Colonies.
The Right Hon. Sir ARCHIBALD SINCLAIR, Bt., M.P., Secretary of State for Air.
Admiral of the Fleet Sir DUDLEY POUND, First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff.

Air Marshal Sir CHARLES F. A. PORTAL, Chief of the Air Staff.

Secretariat:

Sir EDWARD BRIDGES, Major-General Sir HASTINGS ISMAY, Mr. W. D. WILKINSON, Mr. L. F. BURGIS.
**WAR CABINET 279 (40).**

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Naval, Military and Air Operations.

(Previous Reference: W.M. (40) 278th Conclusions, Minute 1.)

1. The Chief of the Air Staff reported that the casualties for the previous day’s operations over and around this country had been:

Our Own—

Fighter Command, nil.
Bomber Command, 2 machines.

Enemy—

5 certain.
7 probable.
9 damaged.

Air Operations. One of the enemy machines destroyed had been brought down by anti-aircraft fire during the night. During the previous night about 150 German machines had operated over this country. The main objectives had been London and Birmingham. Our fighters claimed to have intercepted two enemy aircraft, but had not brought them down.

Our aircraft detailed to attack targets in Germany had been unable to reach Berlin on account of bad weather conditions. They had attacked targets at Kiel, Wilhelmshaven, Bremen and Hamburg. One direct hit on the Gneisenau was claimed. Blenheim aircraft had attacked enemy occupied aerodromes in Belgium and Holland.

The First Sea Lord reported the dispositions which had been taken to intercept a suspicious vessel which had been observed in the direction of the Faroes, which might be a raider making for home. H.M.S. Walpole had been mined and towed into port. A British merchant vessel of 2,700 tons had been damaged and set on fire by a mine, while in convoy. She has subsequently been beached.

The First Sea Lord reported the dispositions of the Mediterranean Fleet. Reconnaissance from Malta on the previous day had detected the Italian main fleet in Taranto and Brindisi; no enemy activity had been observed near Corfu, Argostoli and the Gulf of Patras or in the adjacent waters.

Fourteen aircraft from Illustrious and Eagle, operating from a shore base, had successfully bombed Tobruk and had laid mines in the harbour entrance.

The Chief of the Imperial General Staff gave further details of the action south of Kassala, reported on the previous day, which had taken place on the 19th October. The enemy party which our armoured cars had surprised had been approximately 1,000 strong. Most of them were probably native troops. We had inflicted some 400 casualties, with no loss to ourselves.

On the night of the 26th–27th October one enemy aircraft had dropped ten bombs in the desert, near the Bitter Lake. There had been no damage or casualties.

The Italians had, as yet, made no serious attack on Greece on the Albanian frontier. Greek outposts had been withdrawn in some places. Tatoi aerodrome (Athens), Patras, Preveza and the Corinth Canal had been bombed. There had been no enemy action against Corfu.

An unconfirmed report from a Bulgarian source stated that seven German divisions were coming down the Danube.

A discussion took place on the military situation in the Middle East, which is recorded in the Secretary’s Standard File of War Cabinet Conclusions.

The War Cabinet took note of the above statements.
2. The War Cabinet were informed that a number of German vessels had been reported in the Channel making eastwards. It was, however, too early to draw the deduction that the risk of invasion had receded. Some 60 good German divisions were ready at short notice, close to the invasion ports. So long as that situation continued, it would be essential for us to keep a number of divisions in readiness at home.

The Home Secretary referred to the report that an invasion of this country had been attempted on or about the 16th September and had been repelled. The currency of this report was already making it difficult to enforce the present restrictions in the coastal areas.

The Prime Minister said that there was no foundation for these stories, apart from the heavy defeats which our fighters had inflicted on the German Air Force at that time, and the heavy barrage which we had laid down on the invasion ports.

The War Cabinet:

Invited the Minister of Information to inculcate the need for continued vigilance in our preparations against invasion.

3. The Minister of Home Security reported that the air raid casualties on the previous night had been in London about 60 killed and 250 injured, and in the provinces 6 killed and 67 injured. The London figures included the casualties at St. Peter's Church, Southwark, where three H.E. bombs had hit the crypt, causing 100 casualties.

Birmingham had been heavily bombed on the previous night, New Street Railway Station being badly damaged. The roof of the cathedral had also been hit.

The suggestion was made that some encouraging message should be sent to Birmingham and Coventry. The Minister undertook to consider the suggestion that a message, perhaps from the Lord Mayor of London, should be sent to the Midlands. It was probably undesirable to specify particular towns.

That morning bombs had been dropped near the County Hall, and in Parliament Square.

The War Cabinet took note of this statement.

4. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs gave the War Cabinet the following information:

Very little information had been received in regard to the Italian attack on Greece. Telegram No. 1381 from Ankara reported that the Minister for Foreign Affairs had informed the Greek Minister that Greece could count absolutely on Turkey in the event of Greece being attacked by Bulgaria.

Sir Stafford Cripps reported (telegram No. 925 from Moscow), that M. Vyshinsky had said that the Notes which he (the Ambassador) had given him were regarded as of the greatest importance. M. Vyshinsky had asked for certain explanations, and had said that he would see the Ambassador again in a few days' time. The barter negotiations with the U.S.S.R. were proceeding, and final instructions were being sent to Sir Stafford Cripps that day.
France:

Negotiations between the Vichy and German Governments.
(Previous Reference: W.M. (40) 278th Conclusions, Minute 4.)

M. Rouvier was leaving that evening for Tangier. The Foreign Secretary had seen the notes of what he proposed to say to General Weygand.

No definite news had been received as to the negotiations between the Vichy and German Governments, though speculations as to the position had reached us from Madrid (Telegram No. 922) and from Berne (Telegram No. 1889).

In discussion it was agreed that the Minister of Information should tell the Press that there was no objection to publicity being given to the reported terms which the Germans were seeking to impose on France, provided it was made clear that these reports were unconfirmed. The blame for the present state of affairs should be put on M. Laval, and not on Marshal Pétain.

The War Cabinet took note of this statement.

Germany.

Effect of R.A.F. raids on Berlin.
(Previous Reference: W.M. (40) 271st Conclusions, Minute 3.)

5. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs read to the War Cabinet Telegram No. 809 from Belgrade as to the effects of bombing on morale in Berlin. The upshot of this report was that the cocksureness of the German civil population was disappearing, and that the German people seemed to have less power of resistance to air bombardment than the people of this country. The view was supported by a recent secret report.

In discussion it was suggested that advertisements in the smaller German provincial papers were used by the German civil population as a channel for communicating news to each other, and would repay study.

The War Cabinet:

- Took note of this information, and invited the Chief of the Air Staff to arrange for the Intelligence Staffs to follow up this suggestion.

Spain.

Instructions to Italian Submarines regarding Spanish merchant ships.

6. The First Lord of the Admiralty said that whilst an Italian submarine had been sinking after a recent attack by one of our destroyers, two of our officers had boarded it and obtained an original copy of instructions to Italian submarines to sink at sight merchant vessels belonging to two Spanish steamship lines which were specified.

The Foreign Secretary said that he had sent Sir Samuel Hoare a copy of these instructions and Sir Samuel had asked permission to communicate them to General Franco. This permission had been given. In discussion it was suggested that publicity should be given to these instructions, both in this country and America, where it might be especially valuable at the present moment.

The War Cabinet decided that any question of giving publicity to these instructions should be deferred until Sir Samuel Hoare had had an opportunity of acquainting General Franco of the facts, and of expressing his views as to how the matter should be handled.

India.

Action against Pandit Nehru.
(Previous Reference: W.M. (40) 290th Conclusions, Minute 3.)

7. The Secretary of State for India reminded the War Cabinet that on the 16th September they had agreed that the Viceroy should be informed that the War Cabinet would agree to the enactment of all necessary measures the moment it became clear that Congress was determined to embark on a campaign of deliberate interference with the conduct of the war. The War Cabinet had, however, wished to consider the actual situation created by any Congress Resolution as soon as that Resolution became known.
In the event, Congress had not passed a defiant Resolution. About a fortnight ago, Gandhi had instigated Vinoba Bhave to make anti-war speeches. Vinoba had been arrested and sent to prison for three months.

Sir Maurice Hallett, the Governor of the United Provinces, was anxious as to several speeches made by Pandit Nehru. These speeches were not only anti-war, but were calculated to stir up agrarian discontent. Sir Maurice Hallett had wished to take action against Nehru, and he (the Secretary of State) had authorised him to do so. Indeed, he was surprised that no news of Nehru's arrest had yet been received.

In discussion, the view was expressed that if Nehru was arrested, the case for doing so should be a very strong one, and that he should be tried in open Court. This course would be more satisfactory and effective than preventive detention or restricted residence under Defence Rule No. 9.

The War Cabinet:

Approved the action taken by the Secretary of State for India, and invited him to communicate to the Viceroy the suggestion that Nehru, if arrested, should be tried in open Court.

8. The Lord Privy Seal said that a suggestion had been made that, in view of the negotiations between the Vichy and German Governments and the Italian invasion of Greece, Parliament should meet earlier than the following Tuesday.

The War Cabinet, who were informed that this view was not at all widely held, agreed that there was no reason why Parliament should be summoned to meet at an earlier date than had already been arranged.

The Minister of Aircraft Production informed the War Cabinet that arrangements for alternative accommodation of Parliament in Church House were proceeding. He doubted whether the accommodation would be ready by the following Tuesday, but hoped to be able to give a definite date later in the day.

The War Cabinet took note of this statement.

Richmond Terrace, S.W. 1,
October 29, 1940.
TO BE KEPT UNDER LOCK AND KEY.

It is requested that special care may be taken to ensure the secrecy of this document.

WAR CABINET 280 (40).

CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the War Cabinet, held in the Cabinet War Room, S.W. 1, on Wednesday, October 30, 1940, at 12 noon.

Present:
The Right Hon. WINSTON S. CHURCHILL, M.P., Prime Minister (in the Chair).
The Right Hon. VISCOUNT HALIFAX, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.
The Right Hon. LORD BEAVERBROOK, Minister of Aircraft Production (Items 5-8).

The Right Hon. ERNEST BEVIN, M.P., Minister of Labour and Minister of National Service.

The following were also present:
The Right Hon. HERBERT MORRISON, M.P., Secretary of State for Home Department and Minister of Home Security.
The Right Hon. A. V. ALEXANDER, M.P., First Lord of the Admiralty (Items 1-5).
Captain the Right Hon. OLIVER LYTTELTON, President of the Board of Trade (Item 6).
The Right Hon. A. DUFF COOPER, M.P., Minister of Information.
Sir ALFRED HUBST, Under-Secretary for Mines (Item 6).
Air Marshal Sir CHARLES F. A. PORTAL, Chief of the Air Staff (Items 1-5).

The Right Hon. Viscount CRANBORNE, M.P., Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs.

The Right Hon. Sir ARCHIBALD SINCLAIR, Bt., M.P., Secretary of State for Air (Item 1-5).
The Right Hon. MALCOLM MACDONALD, M.P., Minister of Health (Item 8).
Mr. D. R. GREENFELL, M.P., Secretary for Mines (Item 6).
Admiral of the Fleet Sir DUDLEY FOUNT, First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff (Items 1-5).
Lieutenant-General Sir ROBERT HAINING, Vice-Chief of the Imperial General Staff (Items 1-5).

Secretariat.

Sir EDWARD BRIDGES.
Major-General Sir HASTINGS ISMAY.
Mr. W. D. WILKINSON.
Mr. L. F. BURGIS.
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1. The Chief of the Air Staff reported that on the night of 28th-29th October a Whitley bomber had flown to the Skoda works at Pilsen, a flight of some 690 miles each way, and had made a successful attack. A Whitley of the Coastal Command, with the aid of the new apparatus, had found and bombed a submarine some 90 miles north-west of Bloody Foreland. The contact obtained by this aircraft had probably prevented an attack being made on a number of merchant vessels in the vicinity.

Four hundred and sixty enemy aircraft had visited this country the previous day. This number included 20 Italian aircraft which, however, had not been encountered in the air fighting.

The casualties for the previous day had been:

**Our own**
- 7 aircraft (5 pilots safe).

**Enemy**
- 27 certain.
- 8 probable.
- 10 damaged.

The previous night 200 enemy machines had been over London, Birmingham, Coventry and Liverpool. Thirty-seven of our aircraft had been sent up but had made no interceptions.

One hundred and five aircraft had been sent out on the previous night to attack various targets. Three had reached Berlin in spite of bad weather and had dropped 1,000 lb. bombs. Three of our machines had failed to return and two had crashed on landing in this country.

Of the six bombers which had left for Malta, one had crashed and another had returned owing to bad weather. No news had yet been received of the other four.

The Chief of Naval Staff reported that battle cruisers and other forces were continuing their search west of the Faroes for a suspicious vessel which had been reported.

Kent, after completing temporary repairs, had left Suez, and was now returning to the United Kingdom.

Aircraft from Eagle had carried out an attack on Maltezana, Stampalia, in the Dodecanese Islands, hitting a hangar and setting it on fire. A number of bombs had been dropped on the barracks and near an ammunition dump, and incendiary bombs had been widely spread over the target area. All our aircraft had returned.

The Submarine Swordfish patrolling off Cherbourg had attacked a convoy of enemy merchant ships and claimed one hit.

Shipping Losses. A Norwegian vessel of 3,015 tons had been mined in the Bristol Channel. Details of the damage had not yet been received.

A sludge vessel had been sunk in the Thames Estuary.

The Prime Minister said that whilst we should adhere to the rule that our objectives should be military targets, at the same time the civilian population around the target areas must be made to feel the weight of the war. He regarded this as a somewhat broader interpretation of our present policy, and not as any fundamental change. No public announcement on the subject should be made. The Italians and, according to recent reports, the inhabitants of Berlin, would not stand up to bombing attacks with the same fortitude as the people of this country. For the next
Foreign Information.

France: negotiations between the Vichy and German Governments. (Previous Reference: W.M. (40) 279th Conclusions, Minute 4.)

Syria. (Previous Reference: W.M. (40) 263rd Conclusions, Minute 3.)

(Previous References: W.M. (40) 276th Conclusions, Minute 6, and W.M. (40) 273rd Conclusions, Minute 10.)

Egypt: visit of Secretary of State for War. (Previous Reference: W.M.(40)272nd Conclusions, Minute 1.)

Sir Miles Lampson reported a conversation which he had had with General Catroux (telegram No. 1415 from Cairo) who was anxious to make an immediate appeal to Syria to join the Free French. If this failed, he advocated working with the Druses and Arabs to prevent enemy infiltration.

The Foreign Secretary said that he had given instructions for a telegram to be sent to Egypt to the effect that action in this matter must in any case await the outcome of the conference now being held in Khartoum attended by the Secretary of State for War and General Wavell. In any event, however, it seemed clear that it was necessary to suspend action on this and other projects (e.g., the action proposed at Libreville and the stopping of escorted French merchant vessels passing through the Straits of Gibraltar) until the Vichy position cleared.

The War Cabinet agreed with this view.

The Prime Minister said that he had requested the Secretary of State for War to return to Cairo as soon as the Conference at Khartoum was over, as he considered that Mr. Eden's presence in Egypt at the present juncture would be of great importance.

A telegram had also been received from Cairo (No. 1389) reporting a very satisfactory interview between the Secretary of State for War and the Egyptian Prime Minister.

The War Cabinet took note of these statements.

The Allies.

Proposed Meeting of Allied representatives. (Previous Reference: W.M. (40) 276th Conclusions, Minute 2.)

The War Cabinet were informed that detailed arrangements were now being made for a Meeting of Allied Representatives on the lines discussed in the War Cabinet the previous week. The Meeting would comprise representatives of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, Holland, Belgium, Norway, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Greece, an observer from the French Free Forces, together with the Dominion High Commissioners (other than Eire). The Allied Representatives had been sounded, and were agreeable to the suggestion, which the Dominions Secretary would now communicate to the Dominion High Commissioners. As soon as the
text of the draft Resolution had been approved by the Prime Minister, it would be communicated to the Dominions by the Dominions Secretary. The Meeting should be held as early as possible, probably in about ten days’ time.

The War Cabinet approved the arrangements proposed.

5. The War Cabinet—

Approved the proposals of the First Lord of the Admiralty (explained in W.P. (40) 428) for an extension of the areas declared dangerous to shipping in the English Channel and the Bay of Biscay. The effect of the proposals was to extend the existing zones to give a depth of 70 miles off Ushant.

6. The War Cabinet had before them a Memorandum by the Minister without Portfolio (W.P. (G.) (40) 278), covering a Memorandum by the Secretary for Mines, making the following proposals for increases in pithead prices of coal, to take effect from the 1st November:

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<th>Per ton.</th>
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(i) In the country generally 1 9

(ii) In South Wales, and in Durham also if an application is made from the latter coalfield 2 9

(iii) In the Kent coalfield 3 3

In discussion the following points were made:

(1) Two general increases of prices had been approved since the beginning of the war, the first of 1s. (1s. 4d. in Wales) a ton from November, 1939, and the second of 8d. a ton from May, 1940. The increase now proposed was directly attributable to war damage sustained in certain districts which might have to go out of production if the increase was not approved.

(2) In the last war coal prices had been directly controlled, but great increases had taken place. Inland coal prices had been increased by about 6s. 6d. a ton, and export coal prices had been doubled or trebled. The outputs of the various districts had been allocated in the last war to different consuming areas. In the present war the rise in inland prices had so far been much less than in 1916–18.

(3) At the beginning of the present war, the two sides in the coal industry had agreed to retain the district ascertainment of wages which had been in force since 1921. There had, however, been a national flat rate addition to wages, based on the increased cost of living.

It was clearly impossible within the next few days to alter the whole basis of wages and profits in the industry, although there might be a case for a fundamental review of the position before, say, the end of the calendar year. In any event, the system could not be altered except by agreement with the men.
(4) The position had deteriorated greatly since the collapse of France, even in the normally prosperous districts. Taking the country as a whole, in August, 1940, the owners' balances per ton had still shown an average credit of 8s. This had been completely wiped out in September. The returns for October would be worse.

(5) The Prime Minister suggested that, if the increased prices proposed in W.P. (G.) (40) 278 were approved, the announcement of the increases should be accompanied by a statement that the Government were considering whether some more scientific basis for determining coal prices could not be found.

It was pointed out that any such statement would have to be very carefully worded, in consultation with the Treasury and the other Departments concerned.

(6) It was pointed out that the proposed increases in coal prices would have important repercussions:

(a) on the prices of steel and other raw materials; on the prices of gas and electricity, and on railway costs;
(b) as a result, on the cost of living;
(c) on wages in those industries (in which some 3,000,000 workers were employed) where wages were automatically affected by cost of living changes;
(d) on wages in other industries.

(7) The President of the Board of Trade said that the effect of the proposed increases on the cost of living ought not to be exaggerated. His advisers thought that the consequent rise would not be more than one or two points.

(8) It was pointed out that the index figure would also, in the near future, be affected by the sales tax.

(9) Steel prices had gone up 10 per cent, on the previous day, and it would be unfortunate if another rise occurred in the near future.

It was suggested that the price fixing machinery for the various controlled raw materials should be reviewed, in order to ensure that the policy and timing of price changes were co-ordinated.

The War Cabinet—

(a) Gave general approval to the proposals for increases in pithead prices of coal, to take effect from the 1st November, 1940, contained in W.P. (G.) (40) 278.

(b) Invited the President of the Board of Trade, in notifying the above price increases, to announce that the Government were reviewing the position of the coal industry, with the object of discovering whether some more scientific basis of determining wages and profits could not be found. The President was invited to draft this announcement in consultation with the Minister without Portfolio, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and any other Ministers concerned. This announcement should not refer to the recent negotiations with the Central Council of Colliery Owners for a levy scheme.

(c) Invited the Minister without Portfolio to consult with the Minister of Supply in regard to the arrangements for regulating the prices of controlled raw materials.
Air Raids.

7. **The Minister of Home Security** said that the enemy bombing during the last 24 hours had been indiscriminate, but on a smaller scale than previously. Casualties also had been much smaller than hitherto. The principal objectives had been London, Birmingham and Merseyside.

The War Cabinet took note of the above statement.

8. The War Cabinet had before them a Memorandum by the Minister of Home Security (W.P. (G.) (40) 275) on Air Raid Shelter Policy.

**The Minister of Home Security** explained that our Air Raid Shelter Policy had been governed by the assumption that raids would be comparatively short, and that shelters must be readily accessible. Prolonged night raiding had, however, led certain sections of the public to seek shelter, irrespective of warnings, towards nightfall and to stay there until morning. The arguments against deep shelters which had hitherto prevailed were, therefore, no longer entirely valid. While it was impossible to apply any widespread policy of deep shelter which could be applied evenly over the vulnerable areas of the country, the Minister felt that it would not be right, on this account, to dismiss the possibility of deep shelters. He accordingly suggested that work should be put in hand for providing additional shelter by tunnelling. In London this construction would be linked with the Tube system. In the Provinces tunnelling would be carried out where the physical features made this practicable.

The Minister added that he was anxious, in a broadcast which he would have to make shortly, to deal with the mischievous Communist agitation on the deep shelter question. He felt, however, that it would be impossible for him to deal with the situation adequately if he adopted a wholly negative attitude towards the provision of deep shelters where this was practicable.

In a preliminary discussion the view was expressed that, if the Minister's proposals were adopted, the advocates of deep shelters would claim that the case for deep shelters had been conceded in principle, but that the measures proposed to provide them were entirely inadequate. It was also argued that to provide deep shelters for a very small proportion of the population would do little good and would have unfortunate psychological results.

To this it was replied that the people of this country were too sensible to wish to see a remedy negatived, merely because it could not be universally provided.

**The Lord President of the Council** said that, while the conditions now experienced were different from those anticipated when the policy governing the provision of air raid shelters had been laid down, the Minister of Home Security's proposal did not really represent any fundamental departure from existing policy. Deep shelters had been approved in a number of cases where suitable deep tunnels could be made available, e.g., Ramsgate, Rochester and Luton. While, however, there was everything to be said for an extension of this policy where feasible, the proposal to drive tunnels linked with the Tube system would require very careful handling. There was the risk that if this proposal was taken up by public opinion in the wrong way, it might be used to discredit the whole shelter policy.

**The Minister of Home Security** thought it was important to mention publicly the proposal to make new tunnels connected with the Tubes. This point was reserved for further discussion.
The general conclusion expressed in this preliminary discussion was that the question at issue was mainly one of emphasis in presentation. The general line to be followed might be as follows. The Minister of Home Security would start his statement by stressing the importance of spreading the risk and of popularising the smaller shelters. He would explain that there was neither time nor material available for the construction of deep shelters for large numbers of people. But this was no reason why such measures should not be taken to provide additional deep shelter accommodation where this was feasible. The statement should not be represented as a reversal of existing policy.

The War Cabinet—

Took note of this preliminary discussion, and invited the Minister of Home Security to submit to the War Cabinet a draft of the statement which he proposed to make on this matter.

*Richmond Terrace, S.W. 1,*  
*October 30, 1940.*