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SECRET

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C.C. (54)

62nd Conclusions

CABINET

CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the Cabinet held at 10, Downing Street, S.W. 1, on Friday, 1st October, 1954, at 3 p.m.

Present:

- The Right Hon. Sir WINSTON CHURCHILL, M.P., Prime Minister.
- The Right Hon. ANTHONY EDEN, M.P., Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.
- The Right Hon. Sir DAVID MAXWELL FYFE, Q.C., M.P., Secretary of State for the Home Department and Minister for Welsh Affairs.
- The Right Hon. H. F. C. CROOKSHANK, M.P., Lord Privy Seal.
- The Right Hon. JAMES STUART, M.P., Secretary of State for Scotland.
- The Right Hon. HAROLD MACMILLAN, M.P., Minister of Housing and Local Government.
- The Right Hon. LORD SIMONDS, Lord Chancellor.
- The Right Hon. VISCOUNT WOOLTON, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.
- The Right Hon. the EARL ALEXANDER OF TUNIS, Minister of Defence.
- The Right Hon. Sir WALTER MONCKTON, Q.C., M.P., Minister of Labour and National Service.
- The Right Hon. PETER THORNEYCROFT, M.P., President of the Board of Trade.
- The Right Hon. FLORENCE HORSBRUGH, M.P., Minister of Education.

The following were also present:

- The Right Hon. Sir DAVID ECCLES, M.P., Minister of Works (*Item 3*).
- Mr. HENRY BROOKE, M.P., Financial Secretary, Treasury.

Secretariat:

- Mr. R. M. J. HARRIS.
- Mr. K. L. STOCK.

CONTENTS:

<i>Minute No.</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Page</i>
1	European Defence Nine-Power Conference.	2
2	Formosa	2
3	Roman Temple in the City of London	3
4	Industrial Disputes Docks.	4

European Defence.
(Previous Reference: C.C. (54) 61st Conclusions, Minute 1.)
Nine-Power Conference.

1. *The Foreign Secretary* reported to the Cabinet on the position reached in the discussions at the Nine-Power Conference now proceeding in London.

The Foreign Secretary said that at the present stage of the Conference it was most important that we should do everything we could to make it easier for Dr. Adenauer to secure the support of German public opinion for any settlement on which agreement might be reached. It was possible that the French Government would try to insist that their participation in a general settlement must be conditional on a prior solution of the problem of the Saar. He, therefore, proposed to tell M. Mendès-France privately that, if the French Government were to do this, we should feel unable to adhere to the offer we had made about the maintenance of British forces on the Continent of Europe. It would, of course, remain open to the French Government to try to reach agreement with the Federal German Government about the Saar separately from any general European settlement.

The Foreign Secretary said that, if agreement were reached at the present Conference, it would then be necessary to arrange a full meeting of the Council of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (N.A.T.O.). If the present momentum was to be maintained, this meeting should be held in Paris during the third week of October, which would involve his leaving London early on 20th October. In these circumstances a debate in the House of Commons on foreign affairs could not be held until the following week, although he could, if necessary, make a statement in the House on 19th October. The United Kingdom Government would become no more committed as a result of the meeting of the N.A.T.O. Council than they would be as a result of a successful outcome to the present Conference. The settlement as a whole would in any case remain subject to Parliamentary approval in due course.

The Lord Privy Seal said that the state of legislative business would make the fourth week of October more convenient than the third for a debate on foreign affairs, which might be expected to last for at least two days.

The Minister of Housing said that there were already signs that the Labour Party would take the line publicly that the commitment we had entered into to retain forces of a certain size on the Continent would preclude any reduction in the length of the period of National Service, and the Government must be ready to deal effectively with this accusation.

The Prime Minister said that he felt sure the Cabinet would wish to record their satisfaction at the progress so far achieved at the London Conference, and their best wishes to the Foreign Secretary for its successful conclusion.

The Cabinet—

Took note with approval of these statements.

Formosa.
(Previous Reference: C.C. (54) 61st Conclusions, Minute 2.)

2. *The Foreign Secretary* reported to the Cabinet on the position reached in his discussions with Mr. Dulles about the proposal that the question of Quemoy should be brought before the Security Council.

The Foreign Secretary said that the United States Government had now agreed that the proposed initiative in this matter should be taken by the New Zealand Government and that they should do so,

not under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, but under Chapter VI, which concerned the investigation of situations likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security. They were at present awaiting a final indication of the New Zealand Government's willingness to act, and when this was forthcoming the way would be clear for action which it was hoped would lead to some measure of neutralisation in an area where there was at present a grave risk of armed conflict.

The Cabinet—

Took note with approval of this statement.

**Roman Temple
in the City of
London.**

(Previous
Reference:
C.C. (54) 61st
Conclusions,
Minute 6.)

3. The Cabinet had before them a memorandum by the Minister of Works (C. (54) 301) about the possibility of preserving the remains of the Temple of Mithras recently discovered on the Bucklersbury House site, Walbrook.

The Minister of Works said that, while the discovery of these Roman remains continued to arouse much public interest, the weight of the agitation in favour of preserving them had been reduced by the representations made on behalf of the claims of other ancient monuments. His own advisers were of the opinion that any additional money which could be made available for the preservation of ancient monuments could be put to uses better than the preservation of this Temple. The Chairman of the property company which owned the site had now offered to re-erect the Mithraeum at ground level on a site adjoining Queen Victoria Street and to bear the cost of doing so, which was estimated at about £10,000. It seemed unlikely that the remains of the Temple would greatly attract visitors if they were preserved *in situ* in the basement of an office building; whereas, if they were transferred to the site adjoining Queen Victoria Street, they would be in the open and visible to passers-by. The owner's offer was a generous one and he recommended that it should be accepted. He proposed that he should continue to lend his support to the Roman and Medieval London Excavation Council in their aim of investigating other exposed sites in London where ancient monuments might be found.

There was general agreement in the Cabinet that the offer made by the owner of the Bucklersbury House site to transfer the remains of the Mithraeum and preserve it on an open site adjoining Queen Victoria Street should be accepted, and that an expression of the Government's appreciation should be conveyed to the owner. While the aims of the London Excavation Council were meritorious, it was felt to be inexpedient that the Government should take any further measures of a special nature to promote their activities.

The Cabinet—

- (1) Invited the Minister of Works to accept the offer of the owner of the Bucklersbury House site to transfer the remains of the Mithraeum to an open site at ground level adjoining Queen Victoria Street.
- (2) Took note that the Prime Minister would write to the owner of the site expressing the Government's appreciation of the contribution which he was making towards the preservation of the remains of this Roman Temple.

Industrial Disputes.
Docks.
(Previous Reference: C.C. (54) 61st Conclusions, Minute 8.)

4. *The Minister of Labour* said that more extensive strike action had now been taken affecting maintenance men in certain London docks. If the strike were declared to be official by the Electrical Trades Union, it would inevitably result in a yet wider cessation of work. At present work on the repair of ships was not being seriously impeded, and he was satisfied that it would be premature for his Department to take any initiative to promote a settlement.

Strike action had also been taken by stevedores engaged in sorting incoming shipments of meat. Members of the Transport and General Workers Union, which had negotiated a settlement of the matter in dispute, were affected as they worked in mixed gangs with members of the Stevedores' Union. The employers were willing to negotiate with that Union provided those on strike first returned to work; but, while the present ban on overtime was maintained, they were unwilling to accede to the Union's demand that negotiations should only be resumed on the basis that they would cover all outstanding issues between the two sides. The Ministry of Food were satisfied that supplies of meat were adequate and, pending a settlement of the dispute, incoming cargoes were being held, where necessary, in cold storage aboard ship.

The Cabinet—

Took note of this statement by the Minister of Labour.

Cabinet Office, S.W.1.
1st October, 1954.