CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the Cabinet held at 10 Downing Street, S.W. 1., on Thursday, 15th September, 1955, at 2·30 p.m.

Present:

The Most Hon. the MARQUESS OF SALISBURY, Lord President of the Council
(In the Chair)

The Right Hon. HAROLD MACMILLAN, M.P., Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.


The Right Hon. A. T. LENNOX-BOYD, M.P., Secretary of State for the Colonies.

The Right Hon. SELWYN LLOYD, Q.C., M.P., Minister of Defence.

The Right Hon. VISCOUNT KILMUIR, Lord Chancellor.

The Right Hon. GWILYM LLOYD-GEORGE, M.P., Secretary of State for the Home Department and Minister for Welsh Affairs.

The Right Hon. Sir WALTER MONCKTON, Q.C., M.P., Minister of Labour and National Service.

The Right Hon. DUNCAN SANDYS, M.P., Minister of Housing and Local Government.

The Right Hon. PETER THORNEycroft, M.P., President of the Board of Trade.

The following were also present:

The Right Hon. J. P. L. THOMAS, M.P., First Lord of the Admiralty (Item 1).

Dr. the Right Hon. CHARLES HILL, M.P., Postmaster-General (Item 5).

The Right Hon. HENRY BROOKE, M.P., Financial Secretary, Treasury.

Secretariat:

Mr. H. O. HOOVER.

Mr. F. A. BISHOP.
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I. The Cabinet had before them a memorandum by the Lord Chancellor (C.P. (55) 121) reporting the conclusions of the Committee of Ministers over which he had presided on the procedure to be followed at the forthcoming round-table Conference on Malta, and setting out the considerations which would have to be taken into account in formulating the attitude to be adopted by representatives of the Government at the Conference.

The Lord Chancellor said that he had ascertained that the Leaders of the Opposition who would be members of the Conference were generally in agreement with his procedural proposals. Mr. Mintoff had, however, intimated during a courtesy call, no doubt because it would tend to diminish the importance of his own leading position as Prime Minister, that he hoped the number of independent Maltese called to give evidence would be very much restricted. Mr. Mintoff was also not in favour of the proposal that the Conference should at an appropriate stage pay a visit to the Island. The decisions on both these matters would, of course, have to be taken by the Conference itself.

In view of the complexity of the problem, it was felt desirable that Her Majesty's Government should place before the Conference a full and objective statement of the considerations—constitutional, strategic and financial—which it would be necessary for the Conference to have taken into account. A draft of such a statement was annexed to C.P. (55) 121 and might appropriately be presented to the Conference jointly by the Colonial Secretary and the Financial Secretary, Treasury.

The Lord Chancellor sought especially the guidance of the Cabinet on the attitude which should be adopted at the Conference towards Mr. Mintoff's proposals for Parliamentary representation. It was clear from the statement which the Prime Minister had made in the House of Commons on 28th July, announcing that a Conference was being convened, that there was no intention of taking any final decision on this matter until the Conference had reported. But it might well influence the manner in which the Conference should be handled if the Cabinet had in fact reached any preliminary conclusions as to the desirability or otherwise of according direct Parliamentary representation for Malta.

Discussion in the Cabinet turned mainly on this question. It was argued that, because of the repercussions which could be expected from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, as well as certain Colonial territories, if the financial proposals which were linked with Parliamentary representation were accepted, it would be wise to reach a preliminary conclusion on this main issue at the present stage. Such a conclusion need not be made public. There was some risk (although the circulation of the proposed memorandum might obviate this) that considerable enthusiasm for the Mintoff proposals might develop in the Conference and that the Government might be faced by recommendations to which they might find themselves flatly opposed. Against this, it was argued that the Government had already welcomed the initiative shown by Mr. Mintoff in seeking the closer association of Malta with the United Kingdom without expressing an opinion on his actual proposals for achieving this. The Government were faced with an extremely difficult situation in Malta and the consequences which might flow from the premature rejection of these proposals might be serious.

In further discussion the following points were raised:

(a) Was it essential that Parliamentary representation should carry with it full voting rights or could some intermediate form of membership be devised? Against this, it was pointed out that there was no precedent for limited membership of the House of Commons. Moreover, it would be impracticable to restrict the right of Maltese
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(Signed) Smith
representatives to vote on matters of direct concern to Malta because of the difficulty of segregating such questions from much wider issues.

(b) Could not Parliamentary representation be granted without necessarily incurring a commitment to raise Maltese standards of wages and social services eventually to United Kingdom levels? Such a commitment would not be justified unless United Kingdom rates of taxation were applied to Malta. Nevertheless, representation would be felt in the public mind to carry with it some undefined claim to equality of treatment with the United Kingdom.

The Financial Secretary, Treasury, said that, while he agreed that it would not be appropriate to reach at this stage any general conclusion on the main issue, proposals which involved according Malta equality with the United Kingdom in economic standards would have to be resisted. It was necessary that Malta should have an incentive to develop her own economy and to maintain emigration as a means of easing the costly burden of over-population.

The Colonial Secretary said that he hoped the Cabinet would not feel it necessary to reach any conclusion one way or the other before the Conference started, for any such conclusion would inevitably be reflected at the Conference itself and prejudice its findings. If the Cabinet had to reach a decision at this stage he thought it would have to be generally in favour of the Mintoff proposals.

In further discussion it was agreed that it was essential that the Government representatives at the Conference should express sympathy for the constitutional aspirations of Malta and reiterate the welcome already given to the initiative which the Maltese Prime Minister had taken. Paragraph 63 of the draft memorandum might be suitably amended to this effect. But the Conference should, if possible, be guided to concentrate upon the practicability of the various alternatives, including Mr. Mintoff's proposals, so as to put before the Government a fully objective appraisal. The Lord Chancellor, as Chairman, would have the opportunity of consulting the Cabinet again while the Conference was in session should it prove necessary to do so.

The Cabinet—

(1) Agreed that the memorandum annexed to C.P. (55) 121, amended to take account of the Cabinet's discussion, should be circulated to the Round Table Conference on Malta as a statement on behalf of Her Majesty's Government.

(2) Agreed to reach no conclusion at this stage on the merits of Parliamentary representation for Malta which might prejudice the outcome of the Conference.

(3) Invited the Lord Chancellor, as Chairman of the Conference, to attempt to secure an objective appraisal of the practicability, both in their constitutional and their financial aspects, of any proposals which the Conference would have under consideration.

2. The Cabinet had before them a memorandum by the Minister of Defence (C.P. (55) 120) about the proposals of the Supreme Allied Commander in Europe (SACEUR) for preparations to be made in the warning periods which might be called in the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation area.

The Minister of Defence said that SACEUR had asked national authorities to agree that when a warning period was called he should be automatically authorised to put into force measures which he himself could carry out, and that national authorities should at the same time automatically put into force the measures which they
alone could take. For political and other reasons, it might not be possible for the Government to give full effect immediately to all of the preparations in question, and on certain of them (set out in paragraph 7 of C.P. (55) 120) the Government would have to reserve their position. Subject to that, we should do all we could to meet SACEUR's wishes, and should assure him that even those measures on which the Government had to reserve their position would be given the most sympathetic consideration when the time arose.

The Cabinet—

Endorsed the proposals in C.P. (55) 120.


(Previous Reference: C.M. (55) 30th Conclusions, Minute 5.)

3. The Cabinet had before them a note by the Prime Minister (C.P. (55) 123) circulating a draft of a White Paper on Industrial Relations in the present economic situation, together with an explanatory note by the Financial Secretary.

In discussion of the substance of the paper the view was expressed that, as the White Paper was primarily intended to provide the background for the measures which it was proposed to take to correct the economic situation, it would be unwise to include Appendix I which contained an illustration of the possible state of the economy in ten years' time. Politically, this Appendix gave hostages to fortune unnecessarily. It was speculative, and might attract criticism and debate which would deprive the White Paper as a whole of its full value. It would be well also for the paper to develop further the point that incomes were rising so fast as to draw excessive imports into the country and to remove effective incentives for export.

In further discussion of the timing of the publication of the White Paper, it was argued that it ought not to be published in conjunction with the measures which would be announced when Parliament was recalled on 27th September. Publication of this paper could confuse the immediate issue and would lead the Opposition to demand additional time to debate it. Alternatively, because of the immediate measures, it might attract little attention and therefore fail in its purpose. Moreover, one of the main lessons of the White Paper was the need for a reduction in prices; this might read strangely in view of the effects of some of the measures which the Government were likely to propose. For these reasons, it might be preferable to publish the White Paper shortly before Parliament reassembled in October.

On the other hand, it was pointed out that the White Paper would explain to the public generally, and especially to Government supporters, why certain measures to restrain excessive demand were necessary in present circumstances, and would at the same time make it clear that the Government had not given up their policy of economic expansion. From this point of view it might be useful to publish the White Paper shortly before the Conservative Party conference. This aspect of the Government's policy could, however, be made clear by Ministers in the course of the debate on economic affairs when Parliament was recalled.

The Cabinet—

Agreed to resume consideration of the draft White Paper and the timing of its publication at their next meeting.

Colonial Immigrants.

(Previous Reference: C.M. (55) 16th Conclusions, Minute 1.)

4. The Cabinet had before them a note by the Home Secretary (C.P. (55) 102) covering a report by officials on the social and economic problems arising from the influx into the United Kingdom of coloured workers from other Commonwealth countries, together with a statement on this subject in a form suitable for publication by the Government. The Cabinet also had before them a memorandum by the Commonwealth Secretary (C.P. (55) 113) about the difficulty of
discriminating against immigration from the Asian countries of the Commonwealth.

The Home Secretary said that the Appendix to C.P. (55) 102 was an objective statement which, if published, would not lead to a demand for legislation to restrict Colonial immigration; nor on the other hand would it preclude the Government from introducing such legislation or taking other action if this were later decided to be necessary. Generally speaking, Colonial immigration was not an acute problem at the moment, but it could become one particularly if there were to be a trade recession.

The Minister of Housing said that in certain districts, such as Birmingham and Lambeth, Colonial immigration had already led to serious overcrowding and consequent to social disturbance. It was doubtful whether a requirement that a prospective immigrant had suitable accommodation to which to go would be sufficient to avoid overcrowding, since such a control could easily be evaded; it would be better to require such immigrants, in addition to obtaining an employment certificate, to go to some area where there was no danger of overcrowding.

Discussion showed that it was the general view of the Cabinet that the publication of the statement in the Appendix to C.P. (55) 102 would not serve any useful purpose at the present time. It would be better for the Government first to decide whether any action to restrict Colonial immigration was necessary, and if so what form it should take.

The Lord President said that he took a serious view of the dangers of uncontrolled Colonial immigration and was anxious that the Cabinet should consider practical proposals for dealing with this matter. He suggested that a draft Bill which had been prepared by the Home Office should be circulated as a basis for further discussion.

The Cabinet—

Invited the Home Secretary to circulate a draft Bill to control Colonial immigration, as a basis for discussion at a later meeting.

5. The Colonial Secretary reported that the British Broadcasting Corporation (B.B.C.) were proposing to send Mr. Woodrow Wyatt to Cyprus on 18th September to collect material for a television broadcast in this country on 26th September. Mr. Wyatt intended to interview Archbishop Makarios and had asked for leave to interview the Governor of Cyprus. He would also need, of course, other facilities. It was not normal for Colonial Governors to be interviewed for broadcast programmes of this kind but consideration would have to be given to allowing this if Archbishop Makarios were given such an opportunity to express his views. It was a most inopportune moment for a broadcast of the kind proposed. The Minister of Defence said that he had been asked to agree that the Commander-in-Chief should also be interviewed.

The Postmaster-General said that it would be within his powers to direct the B.B.C. not to make this television broadcast but the Corporation were free to make public that they had been required to refrain from doing so.

It was agreed in discussion that it would be undesirable to exercise compulsory powers in a matter of this kind, except possibly as a last resort. The broadcast, which would be heard and seen only in the United Kingdom, would no doubt tend to give undue
prominence to the Greek point of view. Apart from the question of special facilities, there was no essential difference between television broadcasting and the activities of newspaper or newsreel companies who were free to comment on Cyprus affairs. The Director-General of the B.B.C. had on previous occasions responded very reasonably to representations that certain broadcasts might prove embarrassing to Her Majesty's Government and could be approached on this occasion. On balance it would be better to get the programme postponed. It was desirable, if the programme were to take place, that the international and security significance of Cyprus together with the interests of Turkey should be given due weight, and it was understood that Mr. Wyatt had offered to submit his programme to informal censorship. If the B.B.C. were unwilling to postpone the broadcast but were prepared to satisfy the Government that it would be properly balanced in this way it would probably be desirable to co-operate with it.

The Cabinet—
Invited the Colonial Secretary to approach the Director-General of the B.B.C. with a view to getting the proposed television broadcast on Cyprus postponed until a more opportune time or, if this were not possible, ensuring that it would reflect all points of view in a reasonably balanced manner.

The Colonial Secretary said that the Bishop of Kyrenia (who was more extremist than Archbishop Makarios) had put himself within the scope of a detention order as a result of public statements approving the recent murder of a policeman and other crimes. His statements were direct incitements to violence and bloodshed and could not be overlooked. The Governor possessed powers under which the Bishop could be detained and deported either to the United Kingdom (from which, as a British subject, he would be free to leave forthwith but would not be allowed to re-enter Cyprus) or to certain Colonial territories where he could be locked up. On the other hand, he saw great difficulties in taking such action forthwith for it might well be misunderstood in the United States, whose support was needed if we were to prevent the inscription of Cyprus as an item on the agenda of the forthcoming Assembly or the United Nations.

It was the general feeling of the Cabinet that, while it was not our traditional habit to put people under legal restraint merely for making violent utterances, there could be no compromise with the public condonation of murder. Moreover, it would be necessary to show that effective action had been taken against the Bishop if the morale of the Cyprus police were to be maintained. But it was for the moment more important to prevent the inscription of Cyprus on the United Nations agenda. The Cabinet were informed that, while proceedings clearly could not be delayed unduly, it would still be possible to take action against the Bishop after the question of inscription had been settled.

The Cabinet—
Agreed in principle on the necessity for taking action against the Bishop of Kyrenia for inflammatory utterances and decided to review the matter again at a later meeting.

6. The Foreign Secretary informed the Cabinet of the progress of the United Nations Disarmament Sub-Committee meeting. He said that Mr. Stassen (the special assistant on disarmament to the President of the United States) had continued to press the new plan amplifying the President's original proposals for an exchange of military information and aerial surveys between the United States and the Soviet Union, but had failed to reply to Russian enquiries.
whether the proposal would cover nuclear weapons and whether it would apply to other countries.

Mr. Stassen had wanted to table a resolution on the American proposals in the Sub-Committee, for submission later to the General Assembly of the United Nations. This would have enabled the Russians to exploit differences between the Western Allies on these proposals, and would have given them grounds for seeking a vote in the General Assembly on their own disarmament proposals. Fortunately Mr. Stassen had eventually been persuaded not to pursue for the time being the idea of tabling such a resolution.

The Cabinet—

Took note of this statement.

United Nations.

7. The Cabinet had before them a memorandum by the Foreign Secretary (C.P. (55) 124) proposing that the views of the United States and French Governments should be sought on a Canadian proposal to reach an understanding with the Soviet Government for the admission of seventeen new members to the United Nations.

The Foreign Secretary said that candidates for membership to the United Nations proposed by the Western Powers had so far been vetoed by the Russians, because the Russian candidates had failed to obtain sufficient favourable votes in the Security Council. To break the deadlock, the Russians had hitherto proposed that certain Western and Soviet candidates should be admitted together, but we had rejected this as inconsistent with the Charter. It had now been suggested that all “qualified States” (as set out in paragraph 4 of C.P. (55) 124) should be admitted. This would provide for the admission of seventeen new members and could be regarded as consistent with the Charter. Although these admissions would have disadvantages from our point of view, particularly in that the voting position of the Colonial Powers would be adversely affected, the deadlock would be broken, and the legitimate complaints of certain countries, such as Italy, would be met.

The admission of Spain was at present specifically barred by two General Assembly Resolutions of 1946. While we should be prepared to support the admission of Spain, we should not raise this issue ourselves at the present time.

Discussion showed that several members of the Cabinet took the view that on balance it was contrary to our interests to enlarge the membership of the United Nations. In the past we had consistently opposed the admission of a large number of additional countries. Many of the candidates now suggested would vote against us on Colonial questions, and we might then have to withdraw from meetings at which we considered that the competence of the United Nations was being exceeded.

The view was also expressed that if we had to agree to the admission of such countries as Outer Mongolia, we should take the initiative in seeking the admission of Spain.

It was pointed out that it was not unlikely that the Soviet Government would refuse to support the admission of Japan at present; in that case the United States would not agree to the admission of the rest of the “qualified States,” and the present proposals would come to nothing. Moreover, it was thought that the Canadian and Australian Governments were in favour of reaching a prior understanding with the Soviet Government for the admission of the seventeen countries in question.

The Lord President said that it seemed to be the view of the Cabinet that it was not necessary for the United Kingdom to take any initiative for the admission of the seventeen “qualified States.” But if the Canadian and Australian Governments were strongly in
favour of seeking an agreement with the Soviet Union for that purpose, we should be prepared to support them.

The Cabinet—
Invited the Foreign Secretary to take the views expressed in their discussion into account in making further soundings about the proposal for the admission of the seventeen “qualified States” to the United Nations.

8. The Lord Privy Seal said that the discussions with Leaders of the Opposition Parties had shown that the Government would have the support of the Labour Opposition for the retention of the rule under which discussions or ex parte statements could not be broadcast on any issue during a period of a fortnight before it was debated in either House of Parliament. The Leader of the Liberal Party was, however, opposed to the retention of this rule.

The Labour Opposition were still opposed to television broadcasting of non-political statements by Ministers; the Liberal Party did not object to such broadcasts.

The Cabinet—
Took note of this statement.

9. The Foreign Secretary said that the agreement concluded by the Federal German Chancellor (Dr. Adenauer) had caused much concern in the United States and France. There was little doubt that it represented a substantial victory for Soviet diplomacy and it did not improve prospects for the forthcoming meeting of Foreign Ministers in Geneva.

It might well be that Dr. Adenauer would react strongly if the Russians failed to fulfil their undertaking to release the German prisoners.

The Cabinet—
Took note of this statement.

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