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SECRET

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C.M. (56)

30th Conclusions

CABINET

*CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the Cabinet held at 10 Downing Street, S.W. 1, on Thursday, 19th April, 1956, at 11.45 a.m.*

Present:

<p style="text-align: center;">The Right Hon. Sir ANTHONY EDEN, M.P., Prime Minister.</p> <p>The Most Hon. the MARQUESS OF SALISBURY, Lord President of the Council.</p> <p>The Right Hon. HAROLD MACMILLAN, M.P., Chancellor of the Exchequer.</p> <p>The Right Hon. GWILYM LLOYD-GEORGE, M.P., Secretary of State for the Home Department and Minister for Welsh Affairs.</p> <p>The Right Hon. the EARL OF HOME, Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations.</p> <p>The Right Hon. DUNCAN SANDYS, M.P., Minister of Housing and Local Government.</p> <p>The Right Hon. D. HEATHCOAT AMORY, M.P., Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.</p> <p>The Right Hon. IAIN MACLEOD, M.P., Minister of Labour and National Service.</p>	<p>The Right Hon. R. A. BUTLER, M.P., Lord Privy Seal.</p> <p>The Right Hon. SELWYN LLOYD, Q.C., M.P., Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.</p> <p>The Right Hon. JAMES STUART, M.P., Secretary of State for Scotland.</p> <p>The Right Hon. ALAN LENNOX-BOYD, M.P., Secretary of State for the Colonies.</p> <p>The Right Hon. PETER THORNEYCROFT, M.P., President of the Board of Trade.</p> <p>The Right Hon. Sir DAVID ECCLES, M.P., Minister of Education.</p> <p>The Right Hon. the EARL OF SELKIRK, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.</p>
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The Right Hon. PATRICK BUCHAN-HEPBURN, M.P., Minister of Works.

The following were also present:

<p>The Right Hon. VISCOUNT CILCENNIN, First Lord of the Admiralty (<i>Items 1-5</i>).</p> <p>The Right Hon. R. H. TURTON, M.P., Minister of Health (<i>Item 7</i>).</p> <p>LORD CARRINGTON, Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Defence (<i>Items 1-5</i>).</p>	<p>The Right Hon. ANTONY HEAD, M.P., Secretary of State for War (<i>Items 1-5</i>).</p> <p>The Right Hon. EDWARD HEATH, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary, Treasury.</p> <p>General Sir GERALD TEMPLER, Chief of the Imperial General Staff (<i>Items 1-5</i>).</p>
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*Secretariat:*

The Right Hon. Sir NORMAN BROOK.  
Mr. H. O. HOOPER.  
Mr. J. M. WILSON.

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**Soviet Union.**

Visit of Soviet  
Leaders to the  
United  
Kingdom.

(Previous  
Reference :  
C.M. (56) 17th  
Conclusions,  
Minute 8.)

1. *The Prime Minister* said that he and the Foreign Secretary had met the Soviet leaders on their arrival in London on the previous afternoon and had dined with them that evening. The informal discussion which they had then held had turned mainly on the Middle East. The atmosphere had been fairly cordial. The formal discussions would be opened that afternoon.

**Cyprus.**

(Previous  
Reference :  
C.M. (56) 25th  
Conclusions,  
Minute 3.)

2. *The Lord Privy Seal* said that, after his Business Statement in the House of Commons that afternoon, the Labour Opposition would ask whether a Joint Parliamentary Delegation could be sent to Cyprus. It would be recalled that a similar Delegation had visited Kenya, at the height of the disturbances there, and had presented a helpful report. Subject to the views of the Cabinet, he proposed to give a temporising reply to this suggestion, promising that it would have consideration.

In discussion the view was expressed that no advantage could be expected to flow from a visit by a Parliamentary Delegation to Cyprus at the present time. It was pointed out that, from this point of view, a distinction could properly be made between Kenya and Cyprus; for, while the situation in Kenya had fallen wholly within the responsibility of the United Kingdom Government, the constitutional problem in Cyprus was also of some concern to the Governments of Greece and Turkey. This was an argument which could be used if the suggestion were pressed.

**The Cabinet—**

Invited the Lord Privy Seal to avoid giving any encouragement, in reply to questions in the House of Commons, to the suggestion that a Joint Parliamentary Delegation might visit Cyprus in the near future.

**Capital  
Punishment.**

(Previous  
Reference :  
C.M. (56) 27th  
Conclusions,  
Minute 8.)

3. *The Lord Privy Seal* said that, in pursuance of the Cabinet's decision of 10th April, he had held some preliminary discussion with the Ministers directly concerned on the tactics for handling the Committee Stage of the 'Death Penalty (Abolition) Bill. He proposed to continue these discussions before the opening of the Committee Stage on 25th April; and he would submit a further report to the Cabinet, at their meeting on 26th April, in the light of the progress made on the first day of the Committee Stage.

*The Prime Minister* said that it would be convenient if the Cabinet could review the position again, as proposed, on 26th April. Meanwhile, he hoped that in the proceedings in the House of Commons it would be possible to avoid a position in which the Government, as such, appeared to be giving definite advice to the House to accept or reject particular amendments. The Government's difficulties over this Bill would be enhanced if they directly advised the House to reject an amendment and it were then carried against that advice. The Government spokesman could, as appropriate, express sympathy with the objects of an amendment or explain the difficulties to which it would give rise; but he should avoid giving direct advice to accept or reject a particular amendment and should leave the decision to be taken by the House on a free vote.

## The Cabinet—

- (1) Agreed that Government spokesmen in the proceedings in the House of Commons on the Death Penalty (Abolition) Bill on 25th April should be guided by the views expressed by the Prime Minister in the Cabinet's discussion.
  - (2) Agreed to resume, on 26th April, their consideration of the tactics to be followed in handling the further stages of this Bill.
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**Export of Arms.**  
(Previous Reference : C.M. (56) 22nd Conclusions, Minute 1.)  
Israel.

4. *The Foreign Secretary* said that the French Government had asked whether the Mystere aircraft which they were sending to Israel could be allowed to use Nicosia airport as a diversionary landing ground in the event of need, such as shortage of fuel.

The Cabinet agreed that this would be in accordance with established international practice for helping aircraft in distress, and could be defended on that basis.

## The Cabinet—

- (1) Authorised the Foreign Secretary to inform the French Government that the Mystere aircraft *en route* for Israel might use Nicosia airfield as an emergency landing ground.
  - (2) Invited the Colonial Secretary to inform the Governor of Cyprus of this decision.
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(Signed) *Smith*

British  
Guiana.  
(Previous  
Reference :  
C.C. (54) 71st  
Conclusions,  
Minute 5.)

6. The Cabinet considered a memorandum by the Colonial Secretary (C.P. (56) 100) submitting proposals for the resumption of limited constitutional advance in British Guiana.

*The Colonial Secretary* said that the situation in British Guiana had been brought fully under control. In his view, the time had now come to take a limited step towards the restoration of representative government by arranging for elected members to be introduced into the Legislative Council and the Executive Council. This modest advance would enable us to retain the initiative: if no such step were taken, we should probably be forced later to make more substantial concessions. In the long term the best safeguard would lie in the inclusion of British Guiana in a Caribbean Federation, but she would be unable to join it until some degree of representative government had been restored. Meanwhile, British interests would be fully safeguarded by the fact that the elected members would not be in a majority in either the Legislative Council or the Executive Council.

It was the general view of the Cabinet that this constitutional advance should now be made. Every effort should also be made to bring British Guiana into the Caribbean Federation where, as she possessed undeveloped territories, she would be welcomed by the other members with surplus populations.

The Cabinet—

Approved the proposals in C.P. (56) 100.

Cancer of  
the Lung.  
(Previous  
Reference :  
C.C. (54) 8th  
Conclusions,  
Minute 9.)

7. The Cabinet had before them a memorandum by the Minister of Health (C.P. (56) 99) summarising the most recent evidence on the relation between smoking and cancer of the lung and seeking authority to make a further statement in Parliament on this subject.

*The Minister of Health* said that deaths from cancer of the lung had risen from 1,880 in 1931 to over 17,000 in 1955. Since the Cabinet had last considered the matter in 1954, further evidence had been collected which established a statistical connection between smoking and lung cancer. It was now thought likely that scientific research would establish a causal connection between them. His Standing Medical Advisory Council had recommended that the public should be kept constantly informed of the known risks which attached to excessive smoking and he was being pressed to make a further statement on the matter in Parliament. The statement which he proposed to make was restrained rather than alarmist. It would not satisfy those who felt that the situation demanded a general propaganda campaign, in the schools and elsewhere, against smoking. He considered, however, that this would not be justified in the absence of direct scientific proof of a causal connection between smoking and lung cancer.

*The Prime Minister* said that, in his view, the time had come when the Government should determine their attitude to this problem and decide whether or not they should take a definite line on it. He proposed that a small Committee of Ministers should go more fully into the problem and submit their views and recommendations to the Cabinet.

Discussion showed that the Cabinet were in agreement with the view expressed by the Prime Minister.

The Cabinet—

Appointed a Committee consisting of—

Lord Privy Seal (*Chairman*).  
Lord President.  
Chancellor of the Exchequer.  
Secretary of State for Scotland.  
Minister of Health

to consider and report to the Cabinet whether the Government should take a definite line on the question of smoking as a cause of lung cancer.

Cabinet Office, S.W. 1,  
19th April, 1956.